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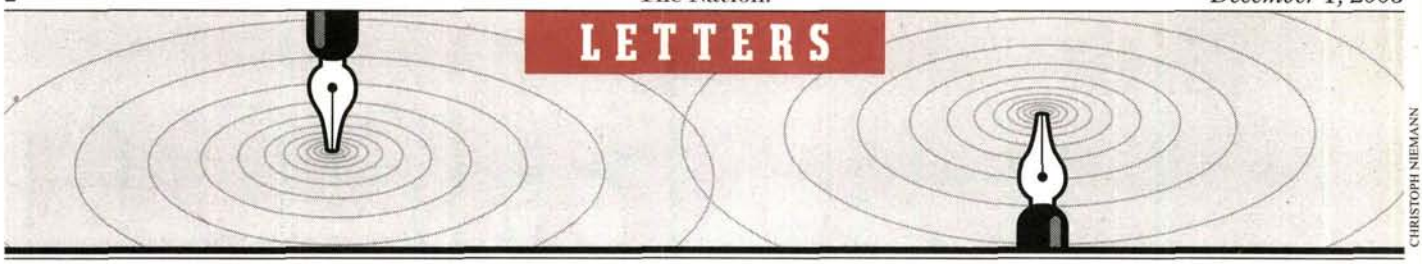

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

WHAT DID BUSH NOSE & WHEN DID...

Portland, Ore.

■ I was so impressed with your October 13 long-nosed Pinocchio Bush cover, featuring David Corn's exposé of Bush lies. I wish you'd use the graphic to make posters, T-shirts, etc.

VIRGINIA ROSS

We have indeed made Pinocchio Bush buttons. Check out www.thenation.com for other aids to the pursuit of truth and justice. —The Editors

New York City

■ Congratulations on David Corn's "Bush's Other Lies"! But Corn overlooks at least one lie—Bush wasn't caught mouthing it, but his fingerprint is unmistakable: the EPA's lie that the air at the site of the World Trade Center attack was safe to breathe. "Because of Bush's lies, thousands will suffer cancers, emphysema, heart attack, stroke, birth defects, stillbirths, sterility, eye/ear/nose/throat disease and much more.... The short-term deaths of 3,000 people will be dwarfed over the long term by the lethal fallout," says Harvey Wasserman in the September 4 *Counterpunch.* Or in the words of Juan Gonzalez in the August 26 New York *Daily News*, "An investigation released by the EPA's own inspector general made a stunning revelation: The trail of public health misinformation began inside the White House." BARBARA ZELUCK

San Francisco

■ David Corn's article on Bush's lies missed one: What if only after a man was selected President was the truth about his *height* made available to the "Merkin Peeble"? Hidden in the folds of the inner pages during the thick of things was the revelation that Bush has lied on every résumé made available to the people—he is 5'11" and not the six-footer he has always stated himself to be. MICHAEL PARKER

Port St. Lucie, Fla.

■ David Corn's willingness to use the word "lie" without reservation in his cover article must signal that we have arrived at a sufficient level of public awareness concerning the Administration's deceits that he can go to bed at night without worrying that one of Ashcroft's goons will "disappear" him. This is good. Corn asks whether Bush is cognizant of his lies. Why ask? Does anyone believe that Bush writes his lines? Does anyone believe that this muddle-mouthed freeloader is capable of articulating policy statements regarding intelligence analyses, arsenic chemistry or economics? I, for one, do not.

The question is this: "What entity is manufacturing this misinformation and structuring these policies?" Bush's shallowness is precisely what was needed for him to serve as an effective front man for the shadow entity running this country. Now that Corn has made it easier for us all to use the "L" word without fear of being imprisoned, he might be emboldened to offer some suggestions on the true source of the fabrications. ARTHUR APISSOMIAN

Ithaca, NY

■ Yes, Bush lies, and those lies have disastrous consequences for Americans, and others. What disturbs me even more, however, is that the media have done so little to challenge those lies. What has happened to the tradition of investigative journalism? Has that tradition become so submerged in the service of "objectivity" and "corporatism" that reporters no longer know how to uncover the truth and challenge the lies with the simple facts already in the public domain? WILLIAM SONNENSTUHL

CATHOLICS TO KIDS: 'SEX KILLS'

Glendale, Ariz.

■ I was pleased to see Katha Pollitt's "Subject to Debate" [Nov. 3] exposing the absurdity of abstinence-only education. My public school district allows Catholic Social Services to administer its abstinence-only program to all fifth and sixth graders. The CSS guy teaching the class spent the first four days terrorizing these 12-year-old boys about all the diseases they will catch by having sex before marriage.

To cover all bases, the CSS instructor briefly discussed condoms during the last few minutes of the final day of instruction. I had planted a question with one of my students, who asked about condoms being 99 percent effective. The instructor was thrown off at first but then bombarded the kids with his views, saying that studies show condoms to be 30 to 70 percent effective, and *not effective at all* against AIDS. The CSS man said condom companies want you to think their products work because (get this!) they just want to sell more condoms.

Later, a sixth grader pulled me aside and said, "Mr. Atonna, I don't ever want to have kids. It's too dangerous." His lesson from the whole "education" experience: Sex will kill you! I guess the larger lesson here is that the factions that fought so hard against sex ed in schools over the years have found a way to infiltrate those public schools with abstinence "education."

ERIC ATONNA

PEDDLING HATE & FEAR, GOP-STYLE

Las Vegas

■ Doug Ireland's "Republicans Relaunch the Antigay Culture Wars" [Oct. 20] might have included one more fun tidbit: Here in Nevada, no major Republican apparently wants to run against Senator Reid, so his competition may well end up being one Richard Ziser, a way-right evangelical, most famous for putting an anti–gay marriage amendment into the Nevada Constitution by scaring the crap out of everyone with images of same-sex education classes. People whose only political thought might have been how to get the City Council to put a new casino closer to their home suddenly saw gay marriage looming. By law, the people had to vote a majority of support for the proposal in two consecutive elections, and they did. So Nevada has an adjusted Constitution for an issue that had not been on the radar. This is, after all, Nevada. If Ireland's predictions are right, progressives should be ready for Ziser's mad assault. WILLIAM HUGGINS

South Palm Beach, Fla.

■ As a gay man and an activist, I found Doug Ireland's article unnerving, particularly in light of the reduced civil liberties Bush and Ashcroft have established with the help of spineless Democrats. Yet I cannot help but be encouraged by the thought that it is almost impossible to succeed from a negative position. When the basis of your argument is a "no," it's hard to build on. And I do think that the majority of Americans do not wish us the kind of harm the rabid right would like to inflict on us. Oppressing homosexuals will not change George Bush's failures in national and international policies. If being against gays is all they've got, they're doomed. DONALD CAVANAUGH

Detroit

■ Fantastic analysis by Doug Ireland. Tiny correction. Bush did not carry every state that has a sodomy law. He did not carry Michigan. In the footnotes of *Lawrence v. Texas* in Michigan Compiled Law 750.158, you will find that we still have such a law, and we certainly went for Gore (and McCain) in 2000. SEAN KOSOFSKY

Director of policy, Triangle Foundation

SHARE A FILE, SHARE A LIFE

Bethlehem, Pa.

■ I enjoyed Eben Moglen's article on file sharing, in which he thoroughly skewered the recording corporations ["Pay Artists, Not 'Owners,'" Oct. 27]. I think a little blame should be laid at the feet of artists. Whenever this story is covered in the corporate media, you have some mega-rich artist mouthing off about the sharing of their music and loss of revenue. Moglen suggested artists release the music themselves over the Net and reap all the profits—a great suggestion. Artists who still go

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EDITORIALS

Dean With a Small 'd'

Now we know why George W. Bush signed the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill. He understood that the provision most directly affecting his future—the doubling of individual contribution limits to $2,000—would automatically double the size of his already record-breaking financial base. His initially stated fundraising goal of $170 million, which his campaign officials now say will not be enough, is likely to rise to a quarter-billion dollars or higher. This threatens to tilt the electoral playing field into a vertical rock-climb for his Democratic challenger.

Bush is thereby gutting the public financing system for the presidential primaries. Howard Dean's decision to be the first Democrat ever to opt out of that system must be seen in that context. When it became clear that Dean could exceed the $45 million cap that comes with taking public matching funds, staying in became self-defeating. Some candidates criticized Dean, but they would have done the same if they'd raised $25 million, mostly in contributions of $200 or less. This is small-d democracy, as in "small donor." Dick Gephardt, the only top-tier Democrat not to sign a pledge written by six campaign-reform groups (Public Campaign, Public Citizen, Common Cause, USPIRG, the League of Women Voters and Democracy 21) because he claimed that the pledge didn't bind candidates to the system during the current cycle, is the most hypocritical—his union backers plan to spend significant sums in his behalf in Iowa and other early-primary states.

Dennis Kucinich, who blasted Dean for breaking his promise to stay in the system, accused the wrong guy of "attempt[ing] to kill public financing" and "take back America—for the corporations." That guy is Bush, not Dean. John Kerry simultaneously attacked Dean's move and hinted that he would opt out too (an announcement was scheduled for November 13), another example of how he keeps contradicting himself. Kerry has wisely pledged to keep to the $45 million spending limit as long as the nomination is unsettled, a stance Dean should also adopt. To Dean's credit, he coupled his pullout with a call for reform measures, including a 5-to-1 public funding match on the first $100 of every contribution to presidential or congressional candidates. This could encourage other people-powered candidates, especially if it included an overall cap of, say, $250 on all contributions.

The situation has insiders like Al From, head of the business-oriented Democratic Leadership Council, grumbling that Dean's small-donor base is tilting the party leftward. Dean, the front-runner, has already advanced further than Jesse Jackson in 1988 and Jerry Brown in 1992, who were also fueled by small donors rather than fat cats.

But Dean's success is a double-edged sword. If he wins the primaries, he'll become the candidate of every $2,000 check-writer now backing more traditionally funded Democrats. So far, he has adroitly managed to attract grassroots Dems who want to reshape the party as much as they want to beat Bush. But this stockbroker's son who catered to business interests while governor of Vermont is hardly the populist tribune.

That doesn't appear to matter to his followers, who are rightly focused on the challenge of beating Bush. But if Dean or any other Democrat who opts out of public financing ends up beating Bush by turning into another big-money candidate, the victory will be mixed. Small-d activists, whether Deanites or not, will have to press hard to make sure this doesn't happen.

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The Candidates on Iraq

ELECTION MATTERS

What would *you* do now in Iraq? is the question confronting the Democratic presidential candidates. Some of the wannabes (Dick Gephardt, John Edwards, Joe Lieberman and, in part, John Kerry) supported George W. Bush's move toward war; some did not (Howard Dean, Wesley Clark, Dennis Kucinich, Al Sharpton and Carol Moseley Braun). But they have to deal—at least hypothetically—with the situation Bush created. They all say they would handle postwar Iraq much differently from Bush. All want to remove the Made in America label from the occupation and bring in troops from other nations to replace or augment US soldiers. Some are keener on the United Nations than others. Some refer to a possible need for more troops in the short run. Not one advocates a withdrawal without a handoff. But only a few candidates have gone beyond generalities to offer specific proposals.

Dean, the front-runner, and all in the pack advocate transferring control of the civilian occupation and reconstruction effort to an international body, with most naming the UN. This, they maintain, would be a prelude to persuading other nations to send in troops and money. "We just can't cut and run," Dean argues. "We need to bring troops from Arabic-speaking nations in so this is an international reconstruction and not an American occupation." Kerry calls for going "to the UN completely." He would then ask the UN to authorize a "multinational force under US command."

The presumption they generally share is that the UN would be willing to assume the task, that it can do the job and that other nations would be inclined to send troops not only for peacekeeping but perhaps also for the more brutal mission of counterinsurgency. Are these valid presumptions? Even as Carol Moseley Braun calls for internationalizing the military operation in Iraq, she notes that "the United Nations won't put troops on the ground there because it's too dangerous." John Edwards argues that if the United States were to yield civilian control, it would "create the kind of energy we need to bring allies and friends to this effort, to help relieve the burden on American troops, relieve the burden on American taxpayers." He has called for "help from NATO," an independent commission to oversee reconstruction contracts (so there are no sweetheart deals for US firms) and "specific timetables" to transfer political authority to Iraqis.

Only Lieberman and Clark have suggested that more US troops might be required. In September, Lieberman, who a year ago called for an international force in Iraq, said, "I would send more troops, because the troops that are there need that protection. And we need some of the specialized services that will help Iraqis gain control of their country and [that will] mean that sooner American troops could come home." He also has proposed that after civilian administration of Iraq is passed to the UN, the occupation be led by "a qualified Arab official."

Clark has offered the most specific road map for Iraq. He advocates creating a new multilateral organization that would administer the occupation and be headed by a non-American. He does not want to pass the buck to the UN. "It is simply unrealistic,"

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COMMENT

he says, "to have the United Nations take over this daunting task—it's not able and it's not willing." He would assign military responsibilities to NATO, and have NATO—under US military command—report to this new council. "With US command, NATO authority and UN endorsement," he asserts, "other NATO countries would send troops, and Arab countries would also step in." He envisions the possible need for more troops, including special forces that can "strike hard" against the insurgents. But he would like to see an overall reduction in US troops, with other nations making up the difference. "An increase [in troops]," he notes, "doesn't mean you're failing." In addition, Clark has called for firing Paul Bremer, the head of the US occupying authority, and for empowering regional councils to name an interim government in order to achieve a faster transition to Iraqi autonomy.

Kucinich, whose slogan has been "UN in and the US out," has boasted that he, too, has a full-fledged proposal to deal with Iraq. Once the UN is in charge, he says, member nations would "commit troops to enable the rotation of UN troops into Iraq and the rotation of US troops out of Iraq." In October he declared, "My plan, if immediately brought to the UN, would enable our troops to be home by the beginning of the New Year." But can the UN, which has cut back on its operations in Iraq, handle the ongoing insurgency? David Swanson, Kucinich's press secretary, says, "We don't know that the UN won't take this on until we ask." And, he adds, "the US is seen as a unilateral occupier. When that ends, a lot of the insurgency ends."

Maybe. In any event, the call from the Democrats to internationalize the occupation runs contrary to the Bush Administration's plan, which focuses more on establishing Iraqi security forces (which might one day replace US troops) than on coaxing other nations to send troops. But as each week passes with the Administration going it (mostly) alone and the insurgency appearing to intensify, the proposed alternatives from the Democratic candidates seem less possible, if perhaps more necessary. "We have to form an international coalition to get it done," says Gephardt, for example. Yet with new suicide blasts and rocket-propelled-grenade attacks, there is less immediate incentive for other nations to bail America out. As an Edwards aide notes, "It's frustrating—a candidate can only think about this stuff and talk about it, and you can't do anything about it." DAVID CORN

From Seattle to Miami

Nine years ago, President Clinton gathered thirty-three of his Western Hemisphere counterparts in Miami for a celebrity-studded gala, a ride aboard a billionaire's yacht and a harmonious discussion of plans for a hemisphere-wide trade deal called the Free Trade Area of the Americas. There was nary a protester in sight.

During the week of November 17, Miami will once again host FTAA talks. But this time officials are more likely to spend late nights bickering behind a security barricade surrounded by demonstrators than gallivanting about town with the likes of Patti LaBelle and Liza Minnelli.

The pendulum of power between free traders and their opponents has swung wildly over the past decade. Five years after Clinton's Miami fiesta, tens of thousands of union members, environmentalists, family farmers and students spoiled the party at the Seattle World Trade Organization summit. That confrontation imprinted the global justice movement onto the public mind and ushered in two years of megaprotests. Then 9/11 knocked some of the force out of the US opposition—terrorism dominated the airwaves and large, angry protests seemed inappropriate to many.

In the meantime, in a rapid succession of social and electoral upheavals, popular movements in Latin America confronted governments with decades of failed market-opening policies. Doctrinaire pro-free-trade leaders were voted or driven out of office in Ecuador, Brazil, Argentina and, in October, Bolivia.

In Miami, free-trade critics hope to show renewed force. Among governments, the stage is set for a showdown between the Bush Administration and that of Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. Tensions are high because the FTAA meeting will test whether developing countries can continue to present a united front against a US corporate agenda, as they did in Cancún. Heading into Miami, the Bush Administration, already in 2004 campaign mode, is refusing two of Brazil's demands that would play poorly among key supporters. These include cuts in domestic farm subsidies and changes in antidumping laws, which have been used to raise tariffs on Brazilian steel and citrus products. Brazil has refused US demands to boost opportunities and protections for international investors, including in government contracting.

In late October, Brazil offered a compromise of sorts that would allow the United States to put off domestic subsidies and antidumping to a second round of FTAA talks if it also agreed to delay talks on investment and government procurement. On two other touchy areas, intellectual property rights and services, Brazil has made an essentially empty gesture of offering to negotiate, but not beyond what's called for by the WTO. US negotiators rebuffed the offer, continuing to insist on a comprehensive agreement by the January 2005 deadline.

The meeting will also be a test of whether US activists can build on the momentum of the peace movement to pull off their first major globalization action since 9/11. Miami would not have been the activists' choice of meeting place. Unlike Seattle or Washington, the city lacks proximity to concentrations of the manufacturing-sector trade unionists who have been the backbone of the US anti–free trade movement. And the broader progressive community in South Florida has struggled to be heard over the constant clamoring of right-wing Cuban-Americans.

Nevertheless, organizers are expecting more than 10,000 demonstrators, including large contingents from the Sierra Club, the Steelworkers, Teamsters, Jobs With Justice, Miami service-sector unions and student groups. [Manuel Pastor and Tony LoPresti report on the organizing campaign among Miami community groups at www.thenation.com.] Anger runs high in these circles because of the failure of the North American Free Trade Agreement (the model for the FTAA) to protect worker rights and because of the powers these trade deals give corporations to sue governments over regulations that may reduce profits. These US protesters will be joined by activists from all over the Americas who are part of the Hemispheric Social Alliance, a

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network of trade union and civil society networks that oppose the FTAA and support a more equitable development agreement. Over the past year, these and other organizations have carried out a campaign to gather ballots on the FTAA. Hundreds of thousands of US ballots will be combined with millions more from around the hemisphere and delivered to negotiators in Miami.

US negotiators no doubt hope that a return to sunny Miami will help swing the pendulum back in their direction. But in the decade since Clinton's free-trade extravaganza, the so-called Washington Consensus model of corporate globalization has been battered by spectacular corporate scandals, the failed promises of NAFTA and the financial crises of the late 1990s. It is this crisis of legitimacy that gives protesters and governments of poor countries the possibility of stalemating the WTO and actually defeating the proposed FTAA. And it is these failures that have opened space for groups like the Hemispheric Social Alliance, the International Forum on Globalization and others to pose markedly different rules for economic relations within and among nations that help communities, workers and the environment. Alliances forged in Seattle and deepened in Cancún can now produce a different kind of globalization.

SARAH ANDERSON AND JOHN CAVANAGH

Sarah Anderson and John Cavanagh of the Institute for Policy Studies are the authors (with others) of Field Guide to the Global Economy *(New Press) and* Alternatives to Economic Globalization: A Better World Is Possible *(Berrett-Koehler).*

A Warning for Miami

Housing organizer Camilo Viveiros couldn't figure out why one tenant was afraid to speak at a rally this past summer. Only after persistent questioning did the man finally admit his fear: "I don't want to end up like you." For the past three years, Viveiros has been organizing with a cloud over his head—allegations, which he denies, that he threw a bicycle at three police officers during a protest at the 2000 Republican convention in Philadelphia. He faces eleven charges, including two counts of aggravated assault, which could carry over thirty years in prison.

Along with two others facing lesser charges, Viveiros is the last of the convention protesters to go to trial, scheduled for this spring in Philadelphia. What makes him special? One of the officers Viveiros allegedly attacked is John Timoney, then–Philadelphia police commissioner, who has waged an almost personal war against protesters. On the eve of protests planned for the meeting of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in Miami, where Timoney is now chief of police, the case of the so-called Timoney Three could further chill the atmosphere for First Amendment dissent. The chill is already pushing zero, thanks to the Patriot Act, and gives the green light for tactics like those used in Philly.

The 2000 GOP convention set a benchmark for repression by police, who secretly infiltrated activist groups and pre-emptively arrested dozens on trumped-up charges of conspiracy. Tensions boiled over when police on bicycles swooped down on a peaceful march, knocking heads and arresting people en masse, then holding them on bail of up to $1 million. Of the 420 arrested, more than half the cases have been thrown out. Only a few dozen have led to convictions, all on misdemeanors, with the rest disposed of through voluntary fines or probation, according to activists.

Viveiros has been pursued with special vigor. After a judge threw out most of the charges against him for lack of evidence, prosecutors fought to reinstate them, finally winning on appeal. For his part, Viveiros not only denies assaulting Timoney but says he himself was attacked from behind by other officers, his head rammed against the pavement until he blacked out. The first time he even knew the charges against him, he says, was when the commissioner shocked him by pointing him out during a preliminary hearing. "I thought when they say your jaw drops, that was just a poetic phrase," says the soft-spoken Viveiros, sitting at a fair-trade coffee shop in Providence, where he now lives. "I had to grit my teeth to keep them from chattering." Witnesses and video footage of the march contradict much of the police account, and supporters speculate that the case is one of mistaken identity at best, since Viveiros was arrested in the area Timoney was patrolling.

Viveiros hardly fits the profile of a violent agitator. He's spent the past eight years organizing tenants near the same blue-collar Massachusetts community where he grew up, and his supporters include directors of local nonprofits, the Boston City Council president and two US congressmen. "He is not a violent man by any means," says Representative Barney Frank, who has worked with Viveiros on housing issues. "He's a very decent, low-key person dedicated to poverty issues [who was] exercising his First Amendment rights. This seems to me a clear case of unfairness."

While Viveiros has spent the past few years distracted by the court battle, Timoney has ridden the case into the national spotlight. Known as a hard-brawling cop from New York—where he led the brutal response to the Tompkins Square Park riot in 1988—Timoney bolstered that reputation in dozens of national media appearances after the Republican convention. In several, he used the alleged tussle to demonstrate his personal role in battling what he called a "cadre, if you will, of criminal conspirators who…cause mayhem and cause property damage and cause violence in major cities in America." In 2001, Timoney turned his new national standing into a lucrative consulting position, planning security for events like the World Economic Forum in New York—where he compared protesters to Osama bin Laden. More recently he helped train Iraqi police in Kirkuk and consulted for the upcoming Democratic National Convention in Boston. He was tapped this year as police chief in Miami, which city officials hope to make the headquarters for the FTAA.

Already, Timoney has talked tough about the trade talks, pushing for an ordinance to make it illegal to carry signs on sticks or to have puppets in the streets. And the misinformation is flowing freely. A security consultant has told residents to expect anarchists armed with "wrist rockets" and "squirt guns filled with acid or urine," and Timoney has warned about "basically spoiled rich kids coming down to try to provoke you." Raising the specter of Philly, Timoney even recounted his alleged scuffle with Viveiros to a reporter, bragging that he picked a fight with the "biggest guy" there (Viveiros is a slight 5'9"). Such posturing makes the charges against Viveiros more suspect, and the chances that more activists will "end up like him" after Miami, more likely. "If this can hap-

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pen to Camilo," says a fellow housing organizer, "it could happen to anyone."

MICHAEL BLANDING

Michael Blanding (www.michaelblanding.com), a senior writer at Boston *magazine, is at work on a book about the history of protest in New England. For information on the Viveiros case: www.friendsofcamilo.org.*

Syria, US Torture Center

TAKING LIBERTIES

Travel agents booking international flights may have to issue a new warning to their customers: Changing planes in the United States could be hazardous to your health. Consider the plight of Maher Arar. A Canadian citizen born in Syria, Arar was returning home to Montreal from Zurich on September 26, 2002, when he stopped at New York's JFK airport to change planes. As he passed through immigration, solely for the purpose of reaching his connecting flight, authorities pulled him aside, denied his requests for a lawyer, interrogated him at length and ultimately accused him, on secret evidence, of being a member of a terrorist organization.

Arar then asked to be deported to Canada, where he had been heading anyway, and where he'd been a citizen for sixteen years. But federal authorities refused and instead put him on a government jet to Jordan, where he was immediately transported to Syria. He spent ten months incarcerated there without charges, much of it in solitary confinement in a three-by-six-foot cell that Arar describes as a "grave." He says he was beaten with cables, threatened with electric shocks and placed in "the tire," which immobilizes prisoners for beatings. About one year later, Arar was released and returned to Canada, where, on November 4, he publically told his story. He denies any connection to terrorism and faces no criminal charges. The Center for Constitutional Rights has asked Congress and Attorney General Ashcroft for a criminal investigation into the role of the intelligence agencies and demanded that Ashcroft investigate whether US officials condoned or aided torture.

Arar's story raises a multitude of questions about how far our government will go in its "war on terrorism." The first concerns the use of secret evidence. George W. Bush went out of his way in the presidential campaign to condemn its use in immigration proceedings, and his Administration has maintained that even after 9/11 it has not relied on secret evidence. Yet in Arar's case, it did just that: He was expelled on evidence he never saw.

Second, what right did the United States have to take a Canadian citizen and put him on a government jet to Syria? The technical justification is that Arar had dual citizenship, and the government had the option to send him to either place because he was denied entry to the United States. But Arar was seeking entry in only the most technical and transitory sense, in order to catch a connecting flight out of the country. He had no desire to stay or even to visit. Yet as it has done so often since 9/11, the government exploited immigration law for purposes it was never designed to serve.

Finally, and most troubling, why did the United States care whether Arar was deported to Syria rather than Canada? We surely have better relations with Canada than Syria. The only possible reason is that federal authorities felt that the Syrians, who have a record of torture, might be able to extract information from Arar that US and Canadian authorities might not get. There is simply no other reason the US government would insist on redirecting Arar—it wanted him tortured but was unwilling to do the dirty work itself and knew Canada wouldn't do it either.

That motive is patently illegal. The Convention Against Torture, which America has ratified, absolutely prohibits not only torture itself but also sending any person to a country where there is a substantial basis for believing that he will be tortured. There are no exceptions to this absolute international ban on torture, and we've incorporated that ban into our own law. Yet the United States sent Arar to Syria not only knowing that it was likely he would be tortured but for the very purpose of subjecting him to torture. Arar's story offers the first direct account of a practice of "rendition" for torture that has been reported by human rights groups [see Eyal Press, "In Torture We Trust," March 31]. And according to unnamed CIA officials quoted in the *Washington Post*, such "renditions" are a matter of official policy, not some egregious mistake. To paraphrase Joseph Welch's famous question to Senator Joe McCarthy, Have we no sense of decency?

DAVID COLE

David Cole, The Nation*'s legal affairs correspondent, is the author of* Enemy Aliens: Double Standards and Constitutional Freedoms in the War on Terrorism *(New Press).*

Rocking the Hip-Hop Vote

Russell Simmons was never a young voter. The 46-year-old hip-hop tycoon cast his first vote in a presidential election seven years ago, he says, at the age of 39. When he was a young man busy creating Def Jam Records and bringing rap into the mainstream, Simmons says, "I didn't think you could be political."

In the music scene that Simmons engineered, politics was

CALVIN TRILLIN

A Silver-Lining View Of George Bush's Not Attending Military Funerals, Lest He Become Associated With Bad News

At least there's no Bush eulogy
On why they had to die.
It's better that they're laid to rest
Without another lie.

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COMMENT

not on the playlist. It was a question of style—and Simmons is betting that for thousands of young people, it still is. His newest project is Hip-Hop Team Vote, a voter-registration initiative launched by the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network (HSAN), which he co-founded with Benjamin Chavis, a former head of the NAACP (who was dismissed after being accused of using NAACP funds to defend himself against a sexual harassment suit). Luring young hip-hop fans with headliners like Eminem, Jay-Z, Nas and P. Diddy, HSAN has been promoting a political agenda that supports drug-law reform, opposes education cuts and encourages community development programs.

"It has to be in style to get people to show up," says Simmons. An August Hip-Hop Summit in Philadelphia was stylish enough to net an estimated 11,000 new registered voters. To gain entrance to an event that featured panel discussions with LL Cool J, Wyclef Jean and other rappers, attendees had to register to vote. If they were already registered, they had to bring a friend who wasn't. Pennsylvania Governor Edward Rendell credited the summit's full-force publicity campaign (sponsored in part by Clear Channel) with signing up roughly 88,000 new Democratic and 9,000 Republican voters in a matter of weeks. Those numbers, says Penny Lee, a spokesperson from Governor Rendell's office, are "unprecedented." Though the outcome may tilt toward the left, Hip-Hop Team Vote is divorced from the specific issues that HSAN engages. In September, Hip-Hop Team Vote forged a partnership with Smackdown Your Vote!, a World Wrestling Entertainment endeavor that urges viewers to take national politics as seriously as professional wrestling. Neither registration drive endorses a particular candidate or party.

Meanwhile, Rock the Vote, the dinosaur that started it all by making voting cool in '90, spiced up the Democratic race November 4 with a forum on CNN for 18-to-30-year-olds. Candidates presented their best shots at a hip thirty-second promotional video and were grilled on issues like job creation, the Patriot Act, marijuana use, partying and the Confederate flag. Morning-after media analysis cast the debate as a rare opening for non-Dean candidates to sneak in some winning punches against the front-runner before a crowd he has been actively cultivating: young voters.

In accordance with the short tradition of youth-vote mobilization, rockers, rappers and wrestlers hope to spark a good debate. But they are keeping it nonpartisan. The punks are a different story. "We are taking sides, and we want to offend a lot of people," says NOFX's Fat Mike (Mike Burkett), who founded a voter-registration website called Punkvoter "to expose the Bush administration and unite punks to stand against their inane policies." The website is the first step in an effort to spur punks to vote against Bush in 2004; next is a compilation album called *Rock Against Bush*. There will be some twenty bands on the album—including hot sellers Green Day and Sum 41 and the more politically charged Anti-Flag—some of which will kick off a tour in March to spread the outrage, and registration booths will be on-site at every event.

The website lists a few reasons the young voting bloc should be angry at the Bush Administration: Kids under the legal drinking age are dying in Iraq, the unemployment rate hit a nine-year high in 2003, more college graduates are moving back in with their parents because they can't find jobs. Whereas Hip-Hop Team Vote is supported by Simmons and other deep-pockets music industry types, on-the-cheap Punkvoter hopes to harness pure punk-rock rage to achieve its goals, one punk at a time. After the 2000 presidential election, says Fat Mike, "I wasn't sleeping well because of the outcome. I thought that if only 600 NOFX fans in Florida would have voted, everything could have been different."

Among those hoping things can be different in 2004 are, of course, the Democratic candidates. While some may be reluctant to court the votes of young people, who turned out in dismal numbers for the past two presidential elections, candidates have their eyes on the vote-mobilization efforts already under way. All the Democratic candidates except Clark (so far) have sat down with Simmons, who says he has given money to every campaign except Lieberman's. "Young people are more giving, more loving. They put a more loving face on government," is how Simmons describes the importance of the young vote to the 2004 elections. Fat Mike puts it another way: "It's time to get mad." KRISTIN V. JONES

Kristin V. Jones, who has written for the South China Morning Post, *is an intern at* The Nation*'s Washington bureau.*

In Fact . . .

BACKDRAFT

■ Echoes of the Vietnam War grew louder last week as the prospect of a long-term US entrapment in Iraq seemed likelier. There were warnings not to "cut and run" and speculation about "Iraqification." Senator Fritz Hollings proclaimed: "They say this is not a Vietnam. The heck it is not." In a symbolic touch, the Army announced that the honor unit known as the Old Guard, garrisoned in Washington, will be shipped overseas, its first posting abroad since Vietnam. The reason for the transfer is that US armed forces are stretched thin, a fact not unrelated to another Vietnam-era flashback—a Defense Department website request for volunteers to serve on local draft boards. "If a military draft becomes necessary," the department explained to those who don't know how selective service (last used in the Vietnam War) works, some 2,000 local boards would determine who would "receive deferments, postponements or exemptions from military service." Despite strenuous White House denials, the story wouldn't die, possibly because the option has become so real. (A bill reinstating the draft has already been introduced in Congress by Hollings and Representative Charles Rangel, who argue that in all-volunteer armed forces there is a disproportionate number of poor and minority GIs on the casualty lists.)

HOMELAND SECURITY

■ Tucked away in Bush's $87 billion spending bill for Iraq is an $8.5 million item for security operations against the Free Trade Area of the Americas protests in Miami.

THIS WEEK ON THE WEB

■ Former Foreign Service officer John Brown looks into Donald Rumsfeld's recent claim that "5,000 small businesses have opened [in Iraq] since liberation on May 1."

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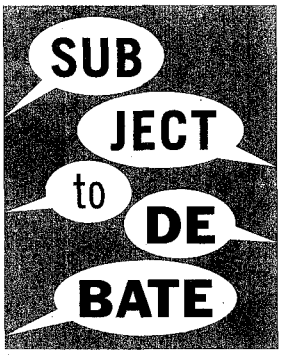
KATHA POLLITT

Waving the Flag



All right, so maybe Howard Dean could have thought of a better way of reaching out to white Southern men than saying he wanted "to be the candidate for guys with Confederate flags in their pickup trucks." Maybe he could have worked in a less fraught masculine symbol, and a less emblematic vehicle, too—a gun rack on his Nissan? No, we don't want to alienate the Million Moms and the UAW…make that a Budweiser in his Thunderbird. Oh wait, that's illegal. Maybe Dean should just have made a commercial: a good-looking, crinkly-eyed white guy in a T-shirt and jeans, with just a few manly smudges, fishing with his little towheaded son while Grandpa plays a harmonica and Tommy Lee Jones intones: "Send a *man* to Washington: Send… Howard Dean." No wait, not Washington, they hate the federal government down there. I give up!

People say they want politicians to get real, but just let one try to say something not totally blow-dried and focus-grouped, and everyone piles on—especially if, like Dean, he's the frontrunner. Thus, white Southern politicians like John Edwards and Zell Miller attacked Dean for stereotyping white Southerners as racists when we all know nobody flies the Confederate flag anymore, or if they do it's merely a symbol of "heritage," while Al Sharpton accused him of failing to understand that people who flaunt the flag are, in fact, racists. "It is simply unconscionable for Howard Dean to embrace the most racially divisive symbol in America," John Kerry mock-thundered. "I would rather be the candidate of the NAACP than the NRA." Dick Gephardt chimed in that he wanted to be the candidate for guys with *American* flags on their pickup trucks. Isn't that special? It's a safe bet that none of these men believe Dean is a racist, was making a covert racist appeal or was about to hoist the Confederate flag over downtown Burlington. Obviously, Dean meant that he wanted to win over working-class Southern whites who vote Republican against their own economic interests for misguided racial reasons. William Saletan pointed out in *Slate* that Dean has been using the Confederate flag image to applause from whites and blacks alike for months. As he put it to the Democratic National Committee in February:

> I intend to talk about race during this election in the South. The Republicans have been talking about it since 1968 in order to divide us. And I'm going to bring us together. Because you know what? White folks in the South who drive pickup trucks with Confederate flag decals in the back ought to be voting with us and not them because their kids don't have health insurance either, and their kids need better schools too.

What's wrong with that? Diane McWhorter, the Alabama native whose Pulitzer Prize–winning *Carry Me Home* is the indispensable chronicle of the civil rights struggle in Birmingham, thinks Dean may have "a tin ear for the South." (We'll leave for another time the question of why there is no such thing as a tin ear for the North.) My cousin Phoebe Pollitt, who teaches school in Boone, North Carolina, thinks Dean made another cultural slip by apologizing: "Most Southern white men in pickup trucks like plain-talking folks, even if they disagree, but then to back down or pander when there is criticism is a sign of weakness, 'un–real manliness,' so to speak. If he wants to court the Southern redneck vote he shouldn't have apologized but gone further talking about how the Republicans use the race card to keep people distracted from the class issues." Says Phoebe's sister Susy, a legal aid lawyer in Raleigh, "There is certainly a Southern white vote for Dean to get here. Edwards won more than 50 percent of the vote for Senate—but it is probably not the vote of men with Confederate flags on their cars." Joe Trippi, would you please hire my cousins right away?

Tin ear or no, you've got to start somewhere—and isn't it honorable and even brave of Dean to confront race and class head-on in these pussyfooting times? Here is Dean, mocked by the media as a one-note antiwarrior, champion of Vermont boutique cheesemakers and Internet insomniacs, actually trying, maybe a little clumsily, to do what pundits always tell the Dems to do—put down that brie, pick up a hunting rifle and talk to the white working class about jobs, schools, healthcare.

Will it work in the South? That class can, and should, and someday soon will, trump race has always been the dream of the "economic left." I have to say I'm skeptical—Nixon's race-based Southern strategy has been moving Southern whites vote by vote into the Republican corner for more than thirty years. In 2000, Bush got 69 percent of the Southern white male vote (and 62 percent of the Southern white female vote, not that anyone cares)—that's a lot for any candidate to turn around. Forget the South, one colleague advises. To win there Democrats would have to move so far right they'd lose in other states. On the other hand, job losses and casualties in Iraq have hit the South hard. "Ignoring the South is crazy," says Chris Kromm of the Institute for Southern Studies. He points out that North and South Carolina alone have lost 180,000 manufacturing jobs since 2001. "These people—e.g. textile workers—aren't just having tough times. They're losing their homes. They're out on the street." Why cede these votes to Ralph Reed, who will be directing Bush's Southern operations in 2004?

Mostly, I suspect, the Confederate flag flap will serve as a plot point for the media's cartoonish attack on Dean should he win the nomination. As Gore was typed as boring and deceptive, Dean will be portrayed as arrogant and hasty. Bush's verbal atrocities will be downplayed; Dean's "insensitive" remarks will make headlines. The South will be America; New England will be France; New York City will be hell. Nobody will acknowledge this—what, you think there's a conspiracy? You think we all meet together in a room and decide?—until someone does a study of campaign coverage two years after Bush is re-elected and proves it.

Unless, of course, people see through the manufactured controversies and wild exaggerations and fake outrage and vote with their heads. ■

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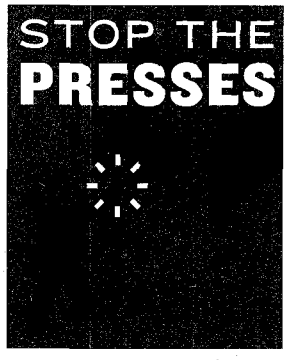
ERIC ALTERMAN

Why Chickenhawks Matter



During the run-up to the Iraq war, it was impossible not to notice that those most gung-ho for the adventure were, by and large, virgins when it came to the actual battlefield. George W. ("I was not prepared to shoot my eardrum out with a shotgun in order to get a deferment. Nor was I willing to go to Canada. So I chose to better myself by learning how to fly airplanes") Bush; Dick ("I had other priorities") Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith, Richard Perle, Tom DeLay, Elliott Abrams—to a man, all found better things to do than join the armed forces during Vietnam, a war most of them supported.

During the war debate, this issue was confused by the casual tossing of the epithet "chickenhawk." This discussion was actually promoted by the war party itself—together with its punditocracy cheerleaders—as it allowed its members to wrap themselves in the flag of free speech. It also appealed to the media, few of whose denizens had seen the inside of a military uniform either. But the point was not—or should not have been—to question the right of those who never served in the military to make military policy, which, after all, is intelligently enshrined in the Constitution. Rather it was a matter of judgment: Knowing nothing of war from firsthand experience, these men (and women) were more likely to have a romantic view of what war could accomplish.

The results of this foolish faith are all around us. While Bush prefers to avoid the many unpleasant aspects of the war—allowing no photographing of returning coffins and attending no funerals of fallen soldiers—he waxes rhapsodic about the alleged democratic benefits the Arab world will one day reap from this botched operation. Meanwhile, as Don Van Natta Jr. and Desmond Butler reported in the *New York Times*, "Across Europe and the Middle East, young militant Muslim men are answering a call issued by Osama bin Laden and other extremists, and leaving home to join the fight against the American-led occupation in Iraq." The net result, according to Uri Dromi, director of International Outreach at the Israel Democracy Institute in Jerusalem, is that Iraq appears to be turning into America's "Lebanon." In that conflict, in which Israel attempted to address a political problem with blunt force, it succeeded only in bleeding itself dry, creating more hatred and hence more terrorism, and ultimately decreasing the security of its citizens before leaving in ignominy and humiliation.

What makes this catastrophe all the more infuriating is how predictable it was—except, of course, by those blinded by ideology and unwilling to listen to more experienced voices. If only the Administration had not turned a deaf ear when those former military men not under "color" contract to the networks spoke candidly about the proposed war. None did so with greater force or credibility than Maj. Gen. Anthony Zinni, who headed the US Central Command from 1997 to 2000 and was later George W. Bush's special envoy to the Israeli/Palestinian negotiations.

Just over a year ago, Zinni gave talks, one to the Middle East Institute in Washington, in which he predicted many problems now facing US occupation authorities. Among Zinni's warnings:

The war party itself: "It's pretty interesting that all the generals see it the same way, and all the others, who have never fired a shot and are hot to go to war, see it another.... We are about to...ignite a fuse in this region...we will rue the day we ever started."

Is this a liberation? What comes next? "If it's short with minimal destruction, there will be the initial euphoria of change. It's always what comes next that is tough. I went in with the first troops that went into Somalia. We were greeted as heroes on the street.... [After] about a month...a group of prominent Somalis...wanted to talk to me. I met with them. The first question out of their mouths was that we'd been there a month, hadn't started a jobs program, and when were we going to fix the economy? Well, I didn't know it was my Marine unit's responsibility to do that. Expectations grow rapidly.... It's not whether you're greeted in the streets as a hero; it's whether you're still greeted as a hero when you come back a year from now."

Is Iraq likely to become a democracy? "If we think there is a fast solution to changing the governance of Iraq, then we don't understand history, the nature of the country, the divisions, or the underneath suppressed passions that could rise up.... If you think it's going to be easy to impose a government or install one from the outside, I think that you're further sadly mistaken."

What are (were) the alternatives? "If I were to give you my priority of things that can change for the better in this region, it is first and foremost the Middle East peace process and getting it back on track. Second, it is insuring that Iran's reformation or moderation continues on track and trying to help and support the people who are trying to make that change in the best way we can.... The third is to make sure those countries to which we have now committed ourselves to change, like Afghanistan and those in Central Asia, we invest what we need to in the way of resources there to make that change happen. Fourth is to patch up these relationships that have become strained, and fifth is to reconnect to the people. We are talking past each other.... We have based this in things that are tough to compromise on, like religion and politics, and we need to reconnect in a different way.

"I would take those priorities before this one [deposing Saddam]. My personal view, and this is just personal, is that I think this isn't number one. It's maybe six or seven, and the affordability line may be drawn around five."

General Zinni is a brave and patriotic soldier. After he made those remarks, he was informed by Bush Administration officials that he "will never be used by the White House again." Compare that with the kid-glove treatment given General ("My God is bigger than your God") Boykin. Like his fellow former soldier, John McCain, Zinni hears echoes in the rhetoric of the Bush team that must give him nightmares. "It reminds me of Vietnam. Here we have some strategic thinkers who have long wanted to invade Iraq. They saw an opportunity, and they used the imminence of the threat and the association with terrorism and the 9/11 emotions as a catalyst and justification. It's another Gulf of Tonkin." ■

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ARTICLES

LULA RAISES THE STAKES

by WILLIAM GREIDER & KENNETH RAPOZA

The bearded political leader they call Lula is the new phenomenon of globalization, a man with audacious ambitions to alter the balance of power among nations. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the new left-wing president of Brazil, envisions a united South America that gains economic strength by drawing closer together in trade and bargaining collectively, much as the European Union does. He wants to create a global coalition speaking for the not-rich countries—reminiscent of the "nonaligned nations" that decades ago tried to stand between the cold war's two superpowers. And he wants to push the IMF, the World Bank and the United Nations to become more democratic.

Lula may well fail. Nevertheless, his aggressive diplomacy looks like the most promising initiative to reform globalization in many decades. One sure indication that Lula must be taken seriously is that the US government has mounted its own nasty, hardball diplomacy to isolate him from potential allies and crumple his ideas before they can gain momentum. The United States versus Brazil is a most uneven contest, and the smart money will not be betting on Lula. But he does not stand alone in the world, and may speak more authentically to this new historical moment than Washington does.

Toward that end, Lula became an energetic world traveler during his first ten months in office. He has persuaded South Africa and India to join Brazil in a new triangular dialogue that will focus on technological alliances and social issues like world hunger, and also serve as a unifying opposition voice inside the World Trade Organization. Indian Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha defined the purpose as promoting the economic and social interests of the Southern Hemisphere. "We have thought enough about South-South cooperation," he said, "and we have reached this stage now where we want to give it a concrete shape." Lula is courting China to become the next big partner. China and Brazil have already signed a commercial accord covering agribusiness, technology, construction and natural resources. In October the two countries jointly launched an earth-monitoring satellite.

In South America, Lula traveled to Peru and Colombia, where he urged closer economic relations between the Andean Pact nations and their southern rivals in Mercosur (the Southern Common Market), anchored by Brazil and Argentina. He offered to mediate talks between the Colombian government and the revolutionary guerrillas of FARC. In Venezuela he gave embattled President Hugo Chávez a $1 billion line of credit to buy Brazilian exports. In mid-October Lula joined with Argentina's President Néstor Kirchner to unfurl the "Buenos Aires consensus," a proposed alternative to the much-despised "Washington Consensus," which has straitjacketed developing economies with its harsh economic rules. The future, they declared, must give poorer nations the sovereign space to determine their own development strategies, balancing social necessities with economic stability.

Lula was also a hit with delegates at the UN General Assembly, where he laid out a visionary proposal for eradicating hunger worldwide and reforming the UN itself. Then he was off to tour five Southern African capitals, with a December excursion planned for the Middle East and, later, Russia. This past summer his travels took him to Washington, where he chatted up George W. Bush. "Not the man I would like to see in the White House," Lula allowed afterward, but the two "would have to get along."

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What Lula has in mind is literally changing globalization as we know it—the version led from Washington. A muscular coalition of developing countries could block the draconian investment rules that multinational corporations and bankers keep pushing for the WTO and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), set for debate in Miami this month. A convergence of third-force nations might also generate more trade and capital investment among the developing economies, allowing somewhat less dependence on the wealthiest nations. In short, Lula's vision is for a multilateral world, with power dispersed from the center, shared more equitably with regional trading blocs and alliances. That idea is anathema to Washington (also Brussels, Paris, Berlin and Tokyo). But, for many political and economic reasons, this new approach might sustain and stabilize the global trading system more effectively than the present top-down arrangement.

'If the US hopes that our countries will be subservient, they are sadly mistaken.'
—Rafael Bielsa, foreign minister of Argentina

Cancún was the flashpoint where Lula's ambitions collided head-on with American power. His diplomats helped organize the coalition of twenty-two developing nations that stood their ground in the WTO negotiations and did not yield to the usual pressure tactics from the United States, Europe and Japan. The talks collapsed, an emblematic victory for Lula in demonstrating that unity means power. After the breakdown at Cancún, US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick announced that he will negotiate individual trade agreements with the "can do" nations, never mind the "won't do" nations. Zoellick's rebuke was "an open declaration of war against Brazil," declared the liberal weekly *Folha de São Paulo*.

Indeed, it was. The United States began immediately to deliver economic threats and reprisals against the Latin nations that had stood with Lula at Cancún. Zoellick and his agents put the squeeze on them, one by one. The impoverished island nations of the Caribbean were told they could forget about their newly negotiated US trade agreement. They folded. Central American countries were threatened with loss of the modest trade preferences already granted to their products. Costa Rica, one of Lula's original allies, was hammered—privatize your energy and telecommunications sectors or be left in the cold—and gave in. Peru and Colombia both resigned from Lula's group. Paraguay and Uruguay also kept their distance, though both are partners with Brazil in Mercosur. Within a few weeks, Lula's G-22 coalition had shrunk to the G-12.

It looked like a rout, but the underlying reality was more complicated. Federico Cuello, while forced to resign as the Dominican Republic's WTO ambassador, expressed admiration for Lula's cause: "Brazil embodies the hope of countries like the Dominican Republic, showing that you can still have dignity at the negotiation table.... I doubt that Lula, who has massive public support and a top-notch Cabinet, will be intimidated."

Zoellick's offensive might not get the WTO negotiations back on track, but it was meant to soften up Lula for the next critical showdown—the upcoming FTAA negotiations. And when Lula didn't seem to get the message, Zoellick's deputy, Peter Allgeier, announced that the United States intends to go ahead on FTAA without him. The new agreement would include all of North and South America—every country but Brazil. Argentina, however, stood firm with Lula and turned down a backdoor trade offer. Its foreign minister, Rafael Bielsa, explained, "If the US hopes that our countries will be subservient, they are sadly mistaken."

Anyone who understands the dynamics of globalization will recognize that the US threat is quite hollow. Together, Brazil and Argentina account for nearly two-thirds of South America's economic output. Brazil, as one well-placed Washington trade lawyer confided, is the only reason US multinationals wanted the FTAA in the first place. It is intended as a NAFTA-style pact that will impose on the world's eleventh-largest economy the investment and public-policy rules that now confine Mexico. Other Latin American countries are small and already compliant by comparison. As recent events demonstrate, Washington doesn't need new trade agreements to push them around.

"Miami will probably decide whether there is an FTAA," predicts Vicki Gass of the Washington Office on Latin America. "I don't see the United States making any real concessions, and I don't see Brazil backing down. It's just not in their interest. They have seen what happened to Mexico under NAFTA."

The threats and warnings from Washington officials are perhaps better understood as an attempt to conceal their own failure. A few days before Miami, US and Brazilian diplomats had a more amiable exchange, perhaps hoping to avoid another drama of name-calling.

But while Lula may be able to exercise real power in the international trade arena, and even pull the giant's beard, he is vulnerable at home—from both the right and the left—with regard to trade policy. The Brazilian economy is stable but growing quite slowly, too weak to produce the jobs and rising incomes he has promised to deliver for his working-class and poor constituencies. Lula's governing coalition includes Cabinet ministers from important industrial sectors—manufacturing and agribusiness—who are extremely nervous at seeing their government in confrontation with the colossus of the North. "I really like what they're doing here," said one Brazilian financier, "but the government definitely got too excited and overplayed their hand. They've given the United States the easy way out—the opportunity to pin the blame on Brazil."

On Lula's left flank, the Workers Party he has led for a generation and the movement of landless peasants are nervous for opposite reasons, fearing that Lula's exertions for expanded trade and investment may eclipse social objectives like reducing Brazil's extreme poverty and inequality. If Lula backs down from the fight with Washington, that might reassure business interests but disillusion his core supporters. The president's poll ratings are still quite high but beginning to decline. Popular wisecracks now depict Lula as Brazil's Bill Clinton, triangulating between supporters and the business lobbyists.

The United States holds most of the cards, including crucial trade concessions it could grant to Brazil's leading agricultural

William Greider is The Nation*'s national affairs correspondent. His most recent book is* The Soul of Capitalism *(Simon & Schuster). Kenneth Rapoza is a staff correspondent in Brazil for* World Press Review. *He has written for publications including* Newsday *and the* Sun Sentinel.

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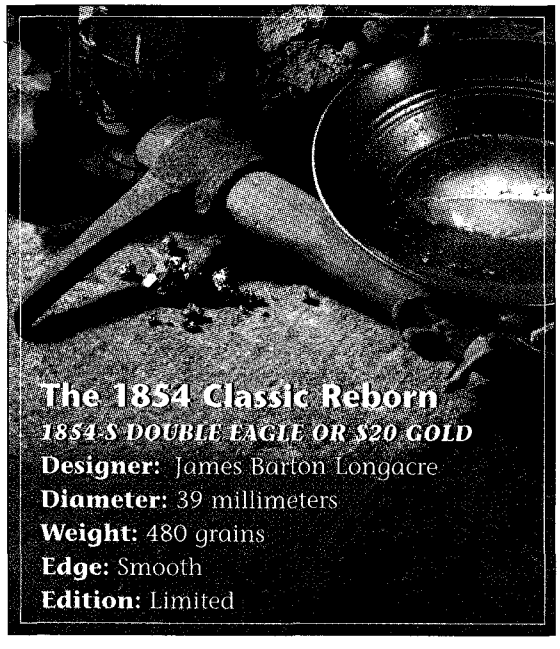

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exports: soy products, citrus, sugar and beef. Since no one expects the Bush Administration to injure those domestic sectors in the run-up to the 2004 election, it is difficult to envision terms that could rescue FTAA without also humiliating Lula. An international relations authority in São Paulo predicts the two Latin allies can resist US pressures, but in that event "Brazil and Argentina will drown holding each other's hands."

And yet even Latin America's business leaders seem to love the man's go-for-broke politics—what Lula has called his "sure-fire democratic gamble." According to a Zogby International poll, only 39 percent of the continent's business and government elites think FTAA would benefit everyone equally, while a majority expect the United States to be the big winner. Businesspeople may fear reprisals from the colossus, but only 12 percent give Bush a positive rating (only 8 percent in Mexico and 2 percent in Brazil). Lula, by contrast, is the most popular political leader in Latin America among elites—supported by 78 percent in Mexico. Maybe his "democratic gamble" has a stronger future than the smart money realizes.

Even among elites, Lula is the most popular politician in Latin America, supported by large majorities.

Why is this happening now? It's about much more than Lula's nerviness. The Brazilian president has made himself point man for a deep shift under way in the politics of globalization—new values were dramatically surfaced by the worldwide popular movement born at Seattle in 1999. Even if Lula falls short, the global landscape has changed since the heady boom time of the 1990s. The establishment has nothing much to say in response, and its usual tactics are no longer so successful at controlling the outcomes.

George W. Bush's go-it-alone foreign policy unwittingly encouraged the emerging realignment of interests. Jose Genoino, president of Lula's Workers Party, explained: "With the end of the cold war and a new US foreign policy, the world has acquired a unilateral nature, with the imposition and pre-eminence of US interests. The discord...has created lines of force favoring the formation of a multilateral world." In other words, many nations, rich and poor, now have an interest in creating a political counterbalance to US power. Brazil's leadership, Genoino emphasized, "has no hegemonic ambitions but rather is aimed at consolidating blocs of forces, producing new significant actors on the continental level and in areas of global relations."

The most significant new actor is China, not Brazil. China's entry into the WTO two years ago tipped the balance of power within global governance as well as global economics, Gwynne Dyer, a savvy Canadian observer of globalization, has pointed out. China's economy is three times the size of Brazil's, but is growing explosively and destined to become a world industrial power with girth that threatens even advanced economies. China—like Brazil or India or any other country—will doubtless pursue self-interest first, but will also find political advantage in making alliances with other poor countries. China, also like Brazil and India, has no desire to be governed in its development by WTO rules devised by American and European multinational corporations. But unlike Brazil, China comes to the debate "with an economy too big to be bullied or bluffed," as Dwyer puts it.

Another, more fundamental reason for political confrontation is that the reigning dogma of globalization has failed, visibly and catastrophically, for developing countries (and less obviously for some wealthy nations, too). A decade ago, when the globalizing forces were accelerating, strategists at major multinationals used to talk ambitiously about the "big emerging markets"—the five countries with the greatest promise for investment and growth. The Clinton Administration picked up the "BEM" line and made a half-baked economic policy of courting those nations: China, India, Mexico, Brazil and Indonesia.

Three of them have since been mangled by globalization. Mexico fell off the list in 1995 when the peso collapsed and the Salinas "miracle" was exposed as a fraud. Indonesia's prospects were smashed by financial crisis in 1997. Through no fault of its own, Brazil was brought down the following year by the financiers' panic that swept around the world, randomly collapsing currencies and economies. In each instance, Washington and Wall Street blamed "crony capitalism" or incorrect management of national finances for the failures. These explanations became far less persuasive after the United States encountered the same disorders—the scandals of corrupt corporate accounting and a rising tide of foreign indebtedness.

For developing countries, the boom-bust experience taught a searing lesson: The center cannot be trusted to run things or to provide sound economic advice. Argentina followed the rigid discipline of the Washington Consensus more faithfully than any other Latin economy. Yet its policies also failed, in 2001, and plunged the country into devastating recession, discrediting the US orthodoxy. Nations large and small are now united in the need to escape the "golden straitjacket," as pundit Thomas Friedman called it. The trick is doing this without offending the world's only superpower or losing entry to its largest consumer market.

Lula's grand ambitions illustrate the historic obstacles. Uniting South American nations in a common cause, if not a fully developed federation, is a very old dream, championed 200 years ago by Simón Bolívar. But his campaign was centered in the northern colonies of Spain, not Portuguese-speaking Brazil. Given the history of continental conflicts, the first step may be at best only a modest platform for trade cooperation and joint public works. A "United States of South America" will remain a distant dream.

Lula's global coalition seems off to a more promising start, and if China joins, it will have impressive muscle. This idea, however, has also failed before. The movement of nonaligned nations during the cold war never formulated a robust ideological alternative beyond declaring they were in neither the Soviet nor the US camp. Brazil never joined, though it sent representatives to the meetings. Most nations merely used nonalignment as a bargaining chip with the two rival superpowers. Some countries cleverly managed to win aid and arms deals from both. The same pressures to cut a separate deal with the big boys will test the new formation.

In any case, the center is not holding. India is trying to organize a Southeast Asia trading zone. China and Japan have made similar noises. American and European leaders denounce freelance alliance-building by Lula and others on grounds that it will balkanize the "one world" trading system into many poten-

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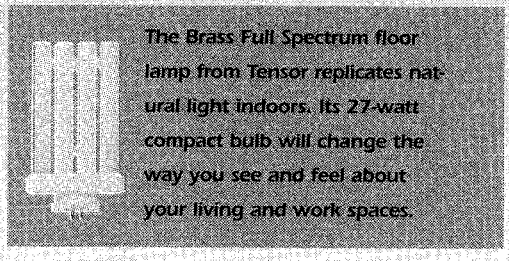

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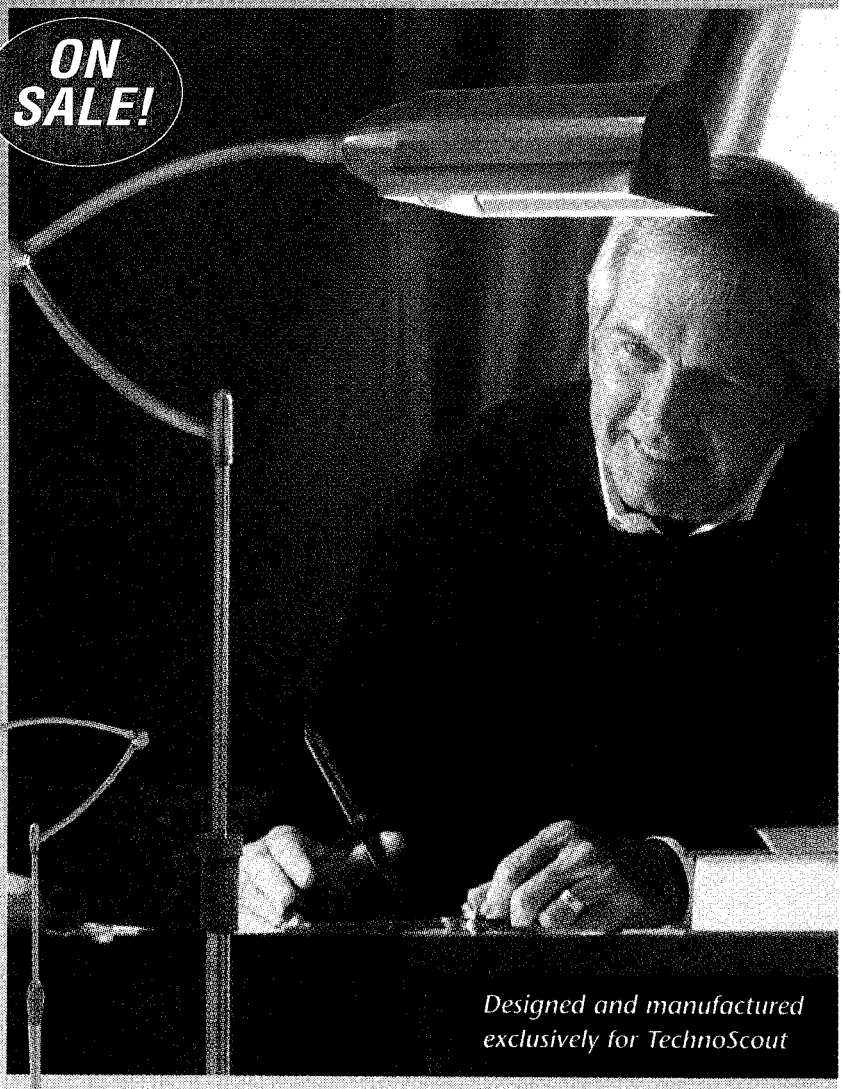

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tially protectionist blocs. But this is deeply hypocritical, because Washington and Brussels are themselves doing dozens of such side deals with smaller nations and regions.

The fundamental problem is that global economic integration cannot proceed with stability under the undemocratic canopy of the WTO, which is designed to serve multinational commerce and investment but not the aspirations of national cultures, economic equity or human values. Events are making clear that the WTO cannot enforce its own commandments, nor can it reform itself. The world, in a sense, is stuck halfway between global governance and the nation-states. Nothing illustrates this better than the current flap over steel, with the United States caught between the demands of its national producers, who want tariffs, and the WTO, which, pressed by European steel-producing nations, has ruled such tariffs illegal. Most nations are too weak to defend their interests while standing alone, yet joining the global system makes them subservient to the powerful few with colonialist appetites.

The future of globalization may actually become more equitable if nations first accept the need for intermediate organizations like regional trading blocs, which can experiment with home-grown development strategies and collaborate on how to synthesize economic goals with social imperatives. Governments would gain greater proximity to the decision-making, but so would citizens with diverse views of how the future should look. The WTO would perhaps continue to exist, but its stalemated condition would not halt the possibilities for progress.

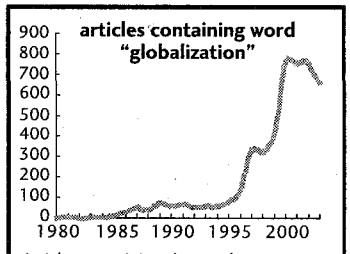
The more localized context would seem to be a better laboratory for advancing global reforms like labor rights, environmental values and democratic self-government. The global-justice movement would have to rethink its strategy, but could achieve far more tangible results in regional settings, instead of the negative victories of blocking the multinational agenda at the WTO. If the US government were not so beholden to the multinationals, its diplomats might see Lula's initiatives as a great opening for a different kind of FTAA—a chance to work out mutual terms for advancing social goals and economic development in tandem. As it is, Washington is using its power unilaterally to discredit and destroy this visionary leader. Americans might ask themselves: Is that really in our long-term national interest? ■

INSTEAD OF BLAMING GLOBALIZATION FOR OUR ECONOMIC ILLS, WHY NOT TAKE IT OVER?

Beyond Globophobia

DOUG HENWOOD

"Globalization" has been on so many lips that it's easy to forget how recently it entered daily speech. Shown nearby is a graph of the word's appearances in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* since 1980. After flatlining its way through the 1980s and early '90s, "globalization"—as a word, at least—took off in a near-vertical ascent in the late 1990s.



Articles containing the word "globalization" in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, 1980–2003. Figure for 2003 annualizes data through July 9.

DOUG HENWOOD

What does it mean exactly? Like many deeply ideological words, it's rarely defined; everyone knows what it means. Elites mean something like the internationalization of economic, political and cultural life, as if these haven't long been internationalized. Non-elites seem to mean everything bad that's happened lately. Writing in the *American Prospect* in 2001, Mark Greif reported on a focus group held for corporate clients worried about the antiglobalization backlash. Thirty Americans were convened by a Jungian market researcher and asked what globalization meant to them. Some responses: "Nothing's personal…it's all machines." "No more privacy." "There's no mystery anymore…." Pressed for detail, respondents complained about speedup, the "fight for the dollar," powerlessness, growing gaps between haves and have-nots, the deterioration of healthcare. An impressive array of complaints, but it's not clear how "globalization" is their cause. They sound like venerable complaints about capitalism.

Experts often do little better. The French international relations analyst Dominique Moïsi defined globalization as "complexity, interaction and simultaneity," a phrase that could also describe a crowd chatting in a bar. The British sociologist Bob Jessop avers that the word "is best used to denote a multicentric, multiscalar, multitemporal, multiform, and multicausal process… the complex, emergent product of many different forces operating on many scales." Indeed.

Whatever it is, globalization is usually taken as a recent arrival. But from the first, capitalism has paid little respect to national borders. After the breakup of the Roman Empire, Italian bankers devised complex foreign-exchange instruments to evade church prohibitions on interest. Those cross-border capital flows moved in tandem with trade flows. And with 1492 began the slaughter of the First Americans and the plunder of the Western Hemisphere. That act of primitive accumulation, along with the enslavement of Africans and the colonization of Asia, made Europe's takeoff possible. As John Maynard Keynes put it:

> the booty brought back by Drake in the Golden Hind may fairly be considered the fountain and origin of British foreign investment. Elizabeth paid off out of the proceeds the whole of her foreign debt and invested a part of the balance (about £42,000) in

This essay was adapted from After the New Economy, *just published by the New Press.* Nation *contributing editor Doug Henwood is editor of the* Left Business Observer *(www.leftbusinessobserver.com).*

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> the Levant Company; largely out of the profits of the Levant Company there was formed the East India Company, the profits of which during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were the main foundation of England's foreign connections; and so on.

He was exaggerating a bit, but the fundamental point is solid.

For a less literary take we can turn to the International Monetary Fund's Anne Krueger, who said in a 2002 speech given in Melbourne:

> The phrase "emerging market" only came into common use in the 1980s, but capital flows into developing countries of course have a much longer history. Stock markets were operating in Turkey by 1866, India by 1875, and Brazil by 1877. Widespread sovereign borrowing—in the sense that we think of it now—got under way in the late eighteenth century, when the spread of constitutional forms of government led to more stable nation-states that recognized continuing liabilities to lenders....
>
> International flows of investment capital were particularly robust in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, against a backdrop of free trade and exchange rates fixed under the gold standard. Indeed, flows to developing countries were larger in relation to the world economy during this first "golden age" of financial globalization than they are today. Here in Australia, capital flows financed half of all domestic investment in the late 1880s.

Or, in the words of James Petras: "From the 15th to the 19th century Latin America's external trade and investment had greater significance than in the 20th century. Similarly, one-third of English capital formation in the 17th century was based on the international slave trade." Capitalism was relentlessly global until World War I; the 1920s effort to restore the old order failed miserably in 1929. Capitalism's retreat to national economies and trading blocs was a sign of crisis. At the end of World War II, one of capital's main tasks was to restructure the international monetary system, and Washington laid great emphasis on getting the world trading system going again. A return to economic health required that the global mechanisms be restored.

Globalization is thought to be the source of many economic ills. Is it? We First Worlders have to be very careful when complaining about its pressure on living standards, since the initial European rise to wealth depended largely on the colonies, and we still derive benefit from cheap labor and cheap resources. It's embarrassing to hear echoes of Pat Buchanan in the complaints by Ralph Nader and his associates that NAFTA and the World Trade Organization threaten US sovereignty. Washington has abused the sovereignty of scores of nations over the decades.

I won't deny that plant relocations to Mexico have put a sharp squeeze on US employment and earnings, or that the threat of those things has reduced workers' bargaining power. But how much has this contributed to downward mobility and increasing stress? Econometricians say that trade explains about 20–25 percent of the decline in the US real hourly wage during the 1970s and '80s. While not insignificant, that still leaves 75–80 percent to be explained, and the main culprits there are mainly of domestic origin. And why, if globalization was so decisively immiserating, did the real hourly wage rise after 1995, reversing a two-decade

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slide, even as NAFTA took effect and trade penetration increased?

An important reason that trade doesn't explain more of our economic history since the early 1970s is that 80 percent of us work in services—and a quarter of those in government—which are insulated from international competition. What did "globalization" have to do with Teddy Kennedy and Jimmy Carter's transport deregulation, or with Reagan's firing of the air traffic controllers, or with Clinton's signing of the welfare bill? What does "globalization" have to do with tuition increases at public universities or attacks on affirmative action? While lots of people blame corporate downsizings on globalization, the more powerful influences were Wall Street portfolio managers, who are always demanding higher profits.

Are globalized economies more unequal than nonglobalized ones? The consulting firm A.T. Kearney has been computing a yearly globalization index for *Foreign Policy* magazine. If you chart the relation of the index to country rankings for inequality, the results are not what a typical antiglobalization activist would expect.

The relation is far from perfect, but if anything, more globalized countries are less unequal than less globalized ones. Western European social democracies are more globalized than the United States but less unequal—as is Canada, to a lesser degree. South Korea is much more globalized than Brazil but less unequal; so is Mexico. The point is not that promoting globalization would promote equality, but that the foregrounding of globalization as the cause of inequality isn't a simple case to make. Income distribution depends more on domestic institutions like unions and welfare states than on internationalization.

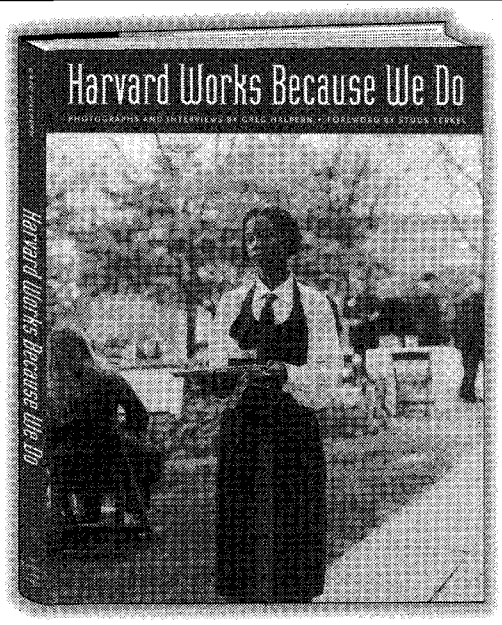
Of course, this is hardly a rigorous exercise, and it compares levels at one given moment. Has "globalization" contributed to inequality? While it's an article of faith among activists that it has, it's actually quite difficult to prove the case either way: It all depends on how you define and measure. Most studies by economists focus on recent history—but over the long term, global income gaps have widened considerably. According to economic historian Angus Maddison's estimates, African and American incomes were roughly equal in 1600 (because the Americans measured were the native population), but with industrialization, they started diverging in earnest. American incomes were three times Africa's in 1820, five times in 1870, ten times in 1913, and twenty times in 1998. When was the moment of "globalization"?

Capitalism has always produced poverty alongside wealth, and capitalism has from the first been an international and internationalizing system—so it makes little sense to try to isolate the "global" aspect as the major culprit in the production of inequality.

The MNCs

Those who identify globalization as the major force behind the production of inequality frequently point to an alleged "race to the bottom," driven by multinational corporations (MNCs), which constantly ransack the globe searching for low costs and high returns. This case isn't easy to prove either.

If you look at the distribution of investment by US multinationals abroad, several things stand out. First, such investments are overwhelmingly located in rich countries. Over half



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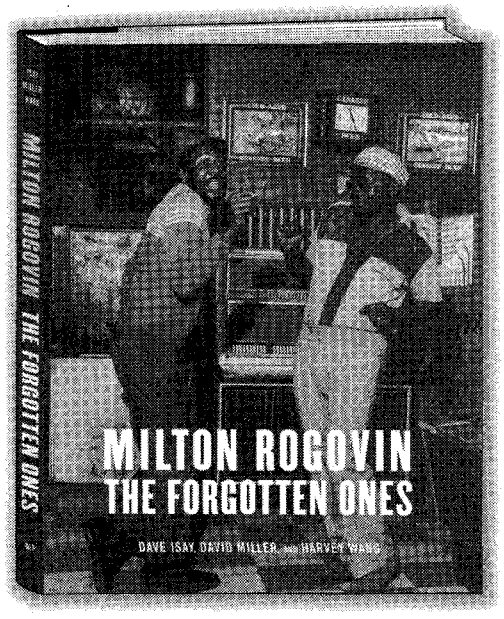

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is accounted for by Western Europe, Canada adds another 10 percent and the richer countries of Asia, 8 percent. So more than two-thirds of the total stock of US foreign direct investment is in countries with incomes roughly comparable to ours. Throw in the four classic Asian Tigers, and you've got more than three-quarters of the total. The poorer countries of Europe are home to less than 1 percent of US foreign investment, and China, even less. Mexico accounts for just 3 percent of the total stock, not much of an increase from 1980. That's not to say that Mexico isn't important in certain industries (like autos and electronics), or that it isn't an important club that employers use to scare workers—but the relocation of production to Mexico isn't quite the driving force of economic evolution that it's sometimes thought to be.

The poorer countries aren't the profit gushers one might expect either. Rates of return in Mexico are high, but Switzerland's are higher, and Latin America's overall figure is below Canada's and Western Europe's.

Another image in need of a rethink is that of a "global assembly line." The share of world output accounted for by US multinationals has changed little over the past two decades: It was 9 percent of world product in 1982 and 8 percent in 1999. And the output of US MNCs is overwhelmingly domestic; 76 percent of their output in 1999 was within these borders, almost exactly the same share as in 1982. Over the same seventeen-year period, old-fashioned exports have actually grown faster than production by US multinationals abroad. Output by foreign branches of US multinationals accounted for less than 2 percent of world product in 1999, a share that has changed little over the past two decades. Their operations in Mexico accounted for 0.1 percent of world product. These are not large numbers.

Among some activists, there's a strange nostalgia for the nation-state, as if it's an innocent structure that globalization is undermining.

That's not to say that production isn't being internationalized in some areas. But it's concentrated mainly in a few industries—autos, electronics, textiles. And the multinationalization that has occurred is much more selective than global. Auto production, for example, is increasingly integrated among the three NAFTA countries, neighbors with long borders and long ties. In this case, "regionalization" is a better description than "globalization."

Nationalist Nostalgias

Among some antiglobo activists, there's a strange nostalgia for the nation-state, as if it's one of the innocent structures that globalization is undermining. At least two aspects of the nostalgia for the nation are worth picking apart. First, in the narrow economic sense, fond memories of the pre-1980 protectionist regimes are often evoked. Like many nostalgias, the historical record doesn't justify the sentiment. Even the most protected developmental state is shaped by external forces; the height of the tariff walls and the vigor of the state intervention themselves are testimony to that. But they seem to flourish in particular historical enclaves, like the Latin American import-substitution model from the 1930s through the debt crisis of the early 1980s, and run into trouble when their moment passes. By the late 1960s, for example, growth slowed in Latin America as import-substitution reached its limits. Domestic firms were inefficient, and average incomes were too low to sustain a home consumer market. Labor agitation was met with repression. As sociologist Ankie Hoogvelt wrote, "Politically, the easiest option for the national bourgeoisie was to suppress internal revolt by blaming the continuation of imperialist forms of domination of their countries, while masking their own complicity in this domination."

Instead of chasing nationalist chimeras, why not go "globalization" one better? Many activists in the wrongly named "antiglobalization" movement still talk locally, even as they're acting and thinking globally. This might be a good time to junk local self-reliance as an ideal and embrace a deeply global perspective.

Along those lines, there's an inspiring quote from Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Empire*. The book itself is not without its problems—prolixity and abstraction to start with—but at least two things are welcome about its megahit status. One is its theoretical ambition, its attempt to think about the dispersed, hard-to-specify nature of power today. Another is its optimism, thanks to its roots in autonomist Marxism, an approach that emphasizes the creative and revolutionary power of workers on their own, and not expressed through state or party. Next to typical left pessimism, autonomists can seem dreamily optimistic, seeing struggle and victory where others see apathy and defeat. And closely related to that cheeriness is its absolute refusal to look backward. A lot of supposedly progressive thinkers and activists would love to recover a lost world of nation-states or self-sufficient localities. Hardt and Negri will have none of this:

> We insist on asserting that the construction of Empire is a step forward in order to do away with any nostalgia for the power structures that preceded it and refuse any political strategy that involves returning to that old arrangement, such as trying to resurrect the nation-state to protect against global capital. We claim that Empire is better in the same way that Marx insists that capitalism is better than the forms of society and modes of production that came before it. Marx's view is grounded on a healthy and lucid disgust for the parochial and rigid hierarchies that preceded capitalist society as well as on a recognition that the potential for liberation is increased in the new situation.

In our normal work lives, we're all linked—often invisibly—with a vast network of people, from across the office or factory to the other side of the world. Standard globalization narratives, mainstream or critical, often efface this fact, seeing capital, rather than the billions who produce the goods and services that the world lives on, as the dominant creative force. That cooperative labor deserves to be acknowledged in itself, as the creative force that it is, but also as a source of great potential power. *Empire* uses a lyric from Ani DiFranco as one of its epigraphs: "Every tool is a weapon if you hold it right." They could have also used a line from Patti Smith: "We created it. Let's take it over." ■

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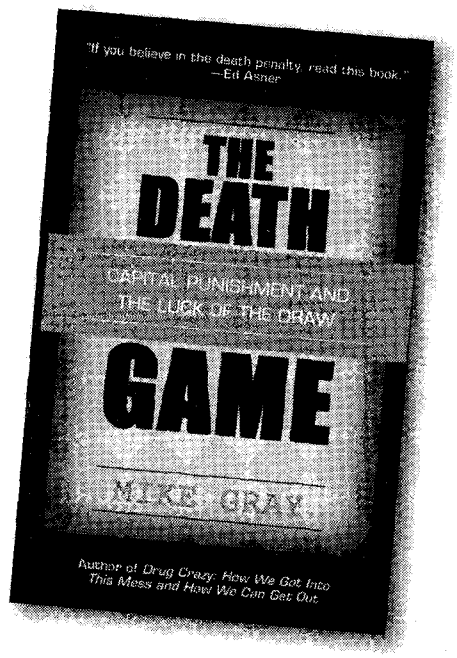
THE COMMON COURAGE EXCERPT

Books for Informed Dissent | Justice USA | Issue #1 (Not always mailed in order.)

The Death Game

Capital Punishment and the Luck of the Draw

By Mike Gray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—Ed Asner
THE
DEATH
CAPITAL PUNISHMENT AND THE LUCK OF THE DRAW
GAME
MIKE GRAY
Author of Drug Crazy: How We Got Into This Mess and How We Can Get Out

HOUSTON – May 13, 1981 – 9:35 P.M.

Bernadine Skillern screams through the windshield at the man with the gun — "Don't! Don't! Don't!"

Right in front of her under the glare of lights in the Safeway parking lot a white man with a bag of groceries is getting mugged. A black teenager has a gun to his head. In a flash of amazing courage Bernadine leans on her horn and screams at the kid. He glances at her for a heart-stopping second. Then he turns back to his victim. "POP!"

The white guy drops his groceries and collapses on the hood of a parked car as the shooter dashes for the street. At this point, everybody within range hits the deck. But not Bernadine Skillern. She drops into gear and peels out after him, almost cutting him off at the exit. Framed in her headlights, he looks directly at her again—probably wondering if he's run into the Lone Ranger.

But Bernadine isn't alone. She has two kids in the car with her and they're screaming their lungs out for mommy to stop. She's done all she can. She slams on the brakes and the black kid disappears into the night. The victim mortally wounded staggers into the Safeway and hits the floor face down…

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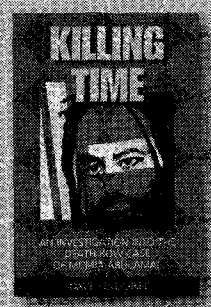

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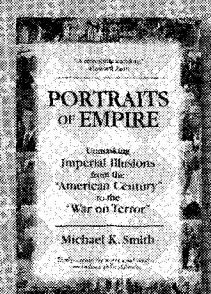

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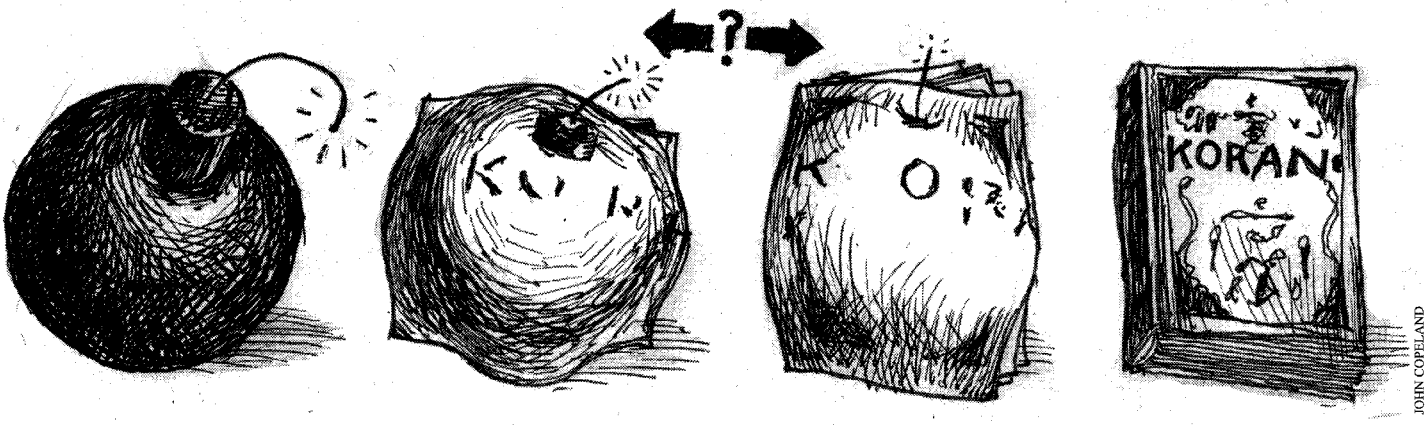
AFTER THE MUBARAK REGIME CRUSHED AL-GAMA'A AL-ISLAMEYA'S BLOODY INSURGENCY, THE MILITANTS SUED FOR PEACE—BUT THEY MAY HAVE WON THE LARGER IDEOLOGICAL WAR.



JOHN COPELAND

Egypt's Islamist Dilemma

LEE SMITH

In his downtown Cairo law office, Montasser al-Zayat is fielding phone calls on his land and mobile lines, answering e-mails, checking the website of a local soccer team and meeting with the press—all while he's tending to his clients. These are women, mostly, who have come on behalf of sons, brothers and husbands imprisoned for their involvement in Egypt's armed Islamist movement. Zayat is the man to see, a celebrity of sorts, famous as the lawyer and de facto spokesman for al-Gama'a al-Islameya, once one of the world's most notoriously violent Islamist groups.

Throughout the 1970s, '80s and '90s, Gama'a sat in judgment over Egyptian society, targeting politicians, policemen, intellectuals, foreign tourists and the Coptic Christian minority for assassination. And for their involvement in a war that left more than 1,300 dead in the 1990s alone, thousands of Gama'a members are still lingering in the country's brutal prison system. Many of them are being detained illegally, even though their bloody engagement with the state officially ended with Gama'a's unilateral truce in 1997. Indeed, this past summer several imprisoned Gama'a leaders went so far as to repudiate a key part of their historical legacy when they apologized for the 1981 assassination of Anwar el-Sadat. The Egyptian president they killed for making peace with Israel, they now say, was a martyr. Militants from other Islamist groups have criticized Gama'a for its change of heart, but Montasser al-Zayat says it's none of their business.

"Our fight now is not to be excluded from society," says Zayat. "Our aim is to get back to our original message of peace and preaching, and to reconcile with the Egyptian people."

Zayat is a barrel-chested 52-year-old whose appearance comports well with his new message of moderation and compromise. He's wearing the signature Islamist beard, a fistful of hair the way the Prophet Muhammad supposedly wore it, along with a tie and shirtsleeves. Zayat spent three terms in prison himself for his opposition to the government, and while he still believes that the current regime is corrupt, he no longer wants to topple it through violent means. The Islamists, he says, are no more capable of running Egypt than the government is.

"I'm self-critical," says the onetime militant turned maverick. "Any other Islamist would say of course we should lead, but they're not as courageous as I am."

Zayat is one of Egypt's best-known Islamists, with a flair for self-promotion that's made him a favorite of the foreign and Arab press here in Cairo, and yet he's always been slightly cagey about his exact relationship to Gama'a. Like all political organizations based on religion or ethnicity, Gama'a is officially banned, and membership in it is therefore illegal—a charge Zayat was imprisoned for in 1994. Thus, while he reportedly joined Gama'a in 1975, he usually represents himself, as he did to me, not as a member of Gama'a but as its lawyer. As one of the more eagerly public faces of the Islamist movement, Zayat has gone even further than Gama'a's reconciliation with the Egyptian government. Last year he challenged his former colleague Ayman al-Zawahiri to call off the jihad against Americans as well.

Zawahiri is the Egyptian doctor and Osama bin Laden lieutenant who merged his own group, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, with Al Qaeda in 1998. Zayat first met him in prison when they'd been rounded up in the aftermath of Sadat's assassination, and still considers him a friend in spite of their tactical differences. Although Zawahiri is in hiding, Zayat managed to get a message to him asking whether he had any second thoughts about killing civilians.

"I asked him, 'Now that more than a year has passed since September 11, are you still convinced what you did was right?'" Zawahiri's response, posted last winter on the Internet, was unequivocal. Regarding "the blessed September attacks," he wrote, "do not stop...killing Americans, as they kill us everywhere."

Lee Smith is writing a book on Egyptian culture for Scribner.

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"He believes what he did was right," says Zayat, "and that I should agree." Zayat doesn't agree. "I refuse violence," he tells me. "I denounce it from conviction."

Zayat's activities over the past two years—writing books, hosting conferences and giving scores of interviews—demonstrate that he has exerted considerable effort to distinguish himself from Al Qaeda.

"Gama'a thinks it's better than Al Qaeda," says Mohammed Salah, Cairo bureau chief of the influential pan-Arab newspaper *al-Hayat*. "They're not going off on their own to do whatever they like. They're older, and they work according to Sharia [Islamic law]."

And that was their point of reference when, following the attacks this past spring that left thirty-five dead in Saudi Arabia and forty-three in Morocco, Gama'a leaders criticized Al Qaeda for violating the principles of Sharia. Days after the operations, Al Jazeera broadcast a recording of a voice that was allegedly Zawahiri's, urging Muslims to drive Westerners out of the "land of Islam," not with "protests and conferences" but with "bloodshed." In the Egyptian press, Gama'a countered that such actions would serve only to force the Muslim world into "enmity with the rest of the world." Gama'a wanted to make it clear that "since we don't aim to harm any nation in any way, they should not target us either."

'Our aim is to get back to our original message of peace and preaching, and to reconcile with the Egyptian people.'

Al-Gama'a al-Islameya's peaceful rapprochement with Egyptian society represents a significant shift in the Islamist movement. While the group's imprisoned leadership asserts that religious study led them to reject their legacy and re-evaluate their aims, there's little doubt their self-reflection has been at least partly prompted by the authoritarian regime that suffers them to exist. Nonetheless, for some time before the 1997 truce, many of the onetime militants recognized that armed struggle had not only failed to bring down the government but had alienated them from their local constituencies. Their moderate turn couldn't have come at a more opportune time. With American policy-makers seemingly bent on fostering democracy, including free elections, throughout the Arab world, the Islamists are in position to reap the benefits.

The notion that any Islamist group at this point is moving toward moderation seems at least counterintuitive, if not absurd. After all, recent terrorist operations, including the November 9 attack in Saudi Arabia, seem to bear out Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's warning that the American war in Iraq would give birth to a hundred more bin Ladens. Of course, Mubarak was hardly concerned about breeding a hundred more Zawahiris when he conducted a ruthless, and ultimately successful, war against Islamists at home. His strategy, not all that different from the Bush Administration's, was that, first, only overwhelming force stops those determined to do violence; second, it deters everyone else from attempting it. The regime drove those it didn't kill into exile, like Zawahiri, and tamed those like Zayat and other Gama'a leaders into wishing no harm to "any nation in any way."

Hala Mustafa is a liberal academic who has written extensively on the Islamist movement. She is a consultant at Egypt's state-sponsored Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies and editor of *Democracy*, a political journal. "All of these divisions in the Islamist circles," she says, "are about the competition of leadership, and arguments over tools and methods. Zawahiri favors a radical approach, while Zayat advocates a more gradual revolution. It's not over basic ideas."

The movement's basic ideas haven't changed much since Egypt's nineteenth-century Muslim reformers laid down the ideological groundwork that led to the founding of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928. The Brothers believed that after years of imperialism—Ottoman, French, British and now American—the decay of real Islamic values had caused Muslims to lose their way. The nascent Islamist movement argued that the only thing that could win justice for Muslims, and make them aware of their true nature, was the installation of a genuine Islamic state. *Islam huwa el hal*, say the Islamists: Islam is the solution, not only to man's spiritual needs, but his political ones as well. As the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan al-Banna put it, the Koran is our constitution.

Whether or not that constitution is compatible with democracy is a current concern among Western policy-makers and academics, but this debate has a long pedigree in Islamist circles. Typically, extremists or militants disdain talk of anything but a theocratic state, whereas moderate Islamists demand, like most Egyptians, transparent elections. Elections, of course, are a necessary component of the democratic process, but they are not the sole defining characteristic of a democracy. Indeed, guarantees associated with democracies, like equal rights for minorities and freedom of speech, are at least expendable, if not contradictory, in a political system that merely advocates majority rule.

While "tolerance" is a moderate Islamist key word, it's not at all clear that it's a concept embodying actual equal rights for non-Muslims and women rather than just a description of a privileged attitude of executive power. The main problem with taking the moderates' talk about democracy seriously is that there is little in the writings or statements of any Islamist indicating a willingness to build democratic institutions that mediate and maintain legitimate political authority. In short, it appears that moderates have merely found it convenient to adopt some of the language of liberal democracy. Granted, it's impossible to judge how the rule of Egypt's moderates would compare with that of Islamists in power in Iran, Sudan and Afghanistan, but Gama'a's past record of attacks on Coptic Christians and women deemed immodest suggests it's unlikely they'd be any more democratic than the current authoritarian regime.

There is only one significant factor, then, that separates moderates like Zayat and militants. The former, for the time being at least, have renounced violence.

After all, as Zayat says, "Starting violence was the government's trap to make the people hate us."

That the Islamists were forced into armed resistance by the state's cruel methods has become a standard conceit, adopted by much of the Western press and even some US government offi-

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cials. This is a fiction—for external, especially American, consumption. Violence has been a part of the movement's intellectual legacy dating back to its very origins, and the groups have proven themselves no different from other Egyptian political bodies, including the state, that have used murder as a political tool. Some of the signal moments from that history include the Brotherhood's 1948 assassination of Egypt's then–prime minister and the 1949 assassination of Banna in retaliation. After the Brotherhood's attempt on Gamal Abdel Nasser's life in 1954, he responded with a massive roundup of the Brethren. What followed was a period of severe repression, torture and execution that culminated in the 1966 hanging of Islamist ideologue Sayyid Qutb.

Once Anwar el-Sadat came to power in 1970, he started releasing prisoners his predecessor had jailed. The Brotherhood had become moderate, broken by torture and execution; also, they'd just grown older. The agents of most of the world's violence, after all, are young men, and jihad is no exception.

Sadat partly encouraged the younger groups as well, al-Gama'a al-Islameya especially, which was at the time predominantly a student organization, with unofficial membership at its high point reckoned in the thousands. One of their recruiting grounds was Cairo University, where Zayat was studying law. While Gama'a's original mission, as Zayat describes it, was *da'wa*, or preaching, the group also offered opportunities for younger activists to make political headway outside the rigid hierarchy of the Brotherhood. Moreover, it was an outlet for those activists who were eager to take up arms once the Brotherhood had decided to lay theirs down. It wasn't long before Gama'a members, influenced by Qutb, began to agitate for armed insurrection.

Anwar el-Sadat was willing to use Gama'a's violence against the left, a tactic generally supported by his new US allies.

Sadat was willing to use Gam'a's violence against the left, a tactic generally supported by his new US allies, long obsessed with Soviet influence in the Middle East. Historians and analysts have tended to criticize Sadat for unleashing forces he could not control, but generally it is they who have been wrong to underestimate the deeply rooted appeal of Islamic identity.

One of the great paradoxes of the Islamist movement is that it dressed its anticolonial utopianism in the privileged vocabulary of the Arab empire's most enduring legacy. Of course, few Egyptians, or Muslims anywhere, regard Islam as an imperial ideology. Islam is simply a fact of Egyptian life. Thus Sadat fashioned himself the pious president. He was faced with mass migrations to the cities from the countryside, much of it comprising young college students who, thanks to Nasser, had access to free education. It's easy to understand how Sadat might have thought Islam was not only a relatively safe palliative but a cohesive force holding the Egyptian family together.

After all, as Mustafa says, "religion is a traditional source of legitimacy in Egypt."

It was certainly familiar to rural migrants and disenfranchised urbanites. This is one reason, as Zayat says, "people liked al-Gama'a al-Islameya."

Gama'a also participated in the sort of welfare programs that characterize the socially conscientious side of Islamist groups, like Hezbollah in Lebanon, Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front and the Palestinians' Hamas.

Gama'a's support was lost amid the blood it shed, including Sadat's. The assassination of Sadat was the "one time that Gama'a and Jihad worked together," Zayat explains, with a half-smile crossing his lips. The operation was one of the turning points in the history of Islamism and, in retrospect, a pretty clear indication of the movement's troubles. The groups had killed a leader largely out of favor with the Egyptian people, but they were no closer to genuine political power. Throughout the 1980s and '90s, they would continue their domestic jihad, but without realizing the true Islamic state they'd dreamed of.

"There was no way to bring down the Egyptian government through armed struggle," Zayat says he recognized back then. "We were losing this cycle of violence. It weakened us."

The spectacularly vicious 1997 operation at Luxor, which killed fifty-eight foreign tourists and four Egyptians, was, till now anyway, the last violent gasp of the militants inside Egypt. With 15 percent of the Egyptian work force depending on tourism for its living, attacks on tourists were calculated to force an economic crisis. The regime's stability, however, was never seriously threatened, and it was only regular Egyptians who suffered. Gama'a succeeded only in yet further alienating its ostensible constituency. With most of its leadership and military wing imprisoned, deceased or abroad, Gama'a had no choice but to make peace. It had gotten the regime's attention but had mobilized a body whose capacity for violence and cruelty was much more formidable than its own.

What has happened to Gama'a is essentially what happened to the Muslim Brothers several decades before. The government beat them militarily, broke them in prison and then showed a kind of mercy. Mubarak started freeing Gama'a members, several thousand by 2001, with the release of another 1,000 this fall. And, again following precedent, the regime sought to use the Islamists to its advantage. In June 2002, a state-owned newspaper conducted interviews with Gama'a leaders in jail, where they renewed their calls for peace. The question was, why now?

The Mubarak regime was caught between a hard-line United States on one side and, on the other, an Egyptian public increasingly outraged over Israel's suppression of the intifada in the Palestinian territories. To the Egyptian government, a cache of reformed terrorists who'd reconciled with their jailers must have seemed like a public relations jackpot. These interviews, says a journalist with ties to the Egyptian government, served two purposes.

"First, it was directed to the United States. The Americans told the regime, 'The Islamists hit the United States because you were ruthless with them,'" he explains. "The regime said, 'No, we're on good terms with them. We have a truce with the Islamists. Their problem is with you, the United States, especially with what you do in Palestine.'"

Further, he says, it allowed the regime to make common ground

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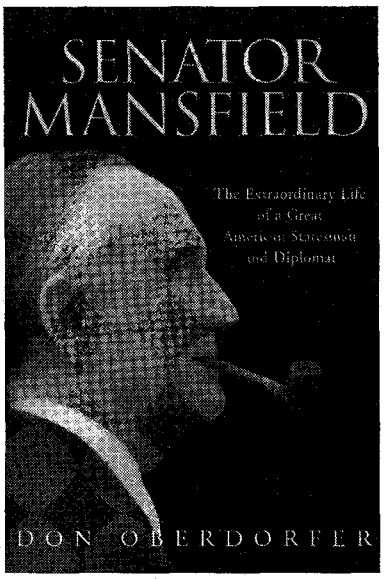

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with the Islamists. "'America is our common enemy,' they said. 'Look at what they do to the Palestinians.'"

Double-dealing is not a long-term political strategy, but one that illuminates a fundamental weakness of the Egyptian government. Since elections are rigged, the state has no real source of popular legitimacy. Further, it lacks a well-articulated vision of what Egypt should look like. Hence, the Islamists, who have a very clear idea of what Egypt should look like, have been able to shape the issue so absolutely that the government itself has come to look like a very large, very violent and bureaucratically inept Islamist group.

"The Islamists established the agenda," says Mustafa. "They put other political forces on the defensive."

The government waged an incoherent ideological campaign and thus lost the larger war. While secular journalists were lampooning the Islamists in the state-controlled press, the government also enlisted the official religious authorities, especially the sheiks at the mosque and university of Al-Azhar, to stand with them against the militants. The traditional religious authorities, increasingly more radicalized themselves, promoted a conservative social agenda that effectively served to popularize Islamist discourse. The government and the Islamists, as Mustafa explains, "are competing for the same source of legitimacy, Islam, and the competition is very hard. Between the two of them, they've Islamized Egyptian society."

Since elections are rigged, the state has no popular legitimacy, and, unlike the Islamists, lacks a vision of what Egypt should look like.

The fact that the government has prevented the Islamist organizations from registering as legal political parties further enhances the Islamists' luster. In their view, any legitimacy deriving from a corrupt government would only make them illegitimate in the eyes of the public, whose support, as Zayat explains, they're struggling to regain. Thus at present, says Zayat, "there's no point running in elections."

Still, the Mubarak regime has never underestimated the popularity of the Islamists and indeed has used the specter of a theocratic takeover to fend off US complaints about human rights violations and rigged elections. And the United States, not wanting another Islamic republic like Iran, especially one on Israel's southern border, has typically conceded the point. Hosni Mubarak's son, Gamal, and his intelligence chief, Omar Suleiman, may be in line to succeed the president, but the Islamists have overwhelming popular support.

Washington hopes to find liberals throughout the Arab world, but even during the heyday of Egyptian liberalism, during the first decades of the last century, there was never a very solid base of support outside of a few stalwart intellectuals and the Westernized elite. And even that is changing now with the rising generation, which has become increasingly conservative, with more and more young women wearing the veil. This is a very dangerous state of affairs for the Mubarak regime: It's one thing to have the underemployed middle classes embrace Islamist discourse; it's yet another for the children of the very elites who have flourished under the government to partake of the Islamic resurgence.

The result is that there are many Egyptians at every level of society who sound like the newly moderate Montasser al-Zayat. Zayat recognized years ago that the militants were losing their war and losing face. He moved toward the center and found that much of Egypt had come there from other directions and for different reasons. Hence, it seems that the forms the Islamist movement will take in the future will look less like revolutionary cadres of the faithful and more like political parties. This has already started to happen in some Arab states, like Kuwait, where the July parliamentary elections were a major victory for Islamist parties and Islamist independents.

One question now circulating in the Egyptian press is whether the government intends to bring Gama'a into the political process. The regime has already made an example of Gama'a to show there is no advantage to militancy; will it show there are practical political benefits to moderation? If the Islamists are not brought into the process, the likely alternative is an unhappy one. The contemporary history of the Islamist movement suggests that there will be more rounds of violence from young men who will take up arms, even after the aging leaders of al-Gama'a al-Islameya have laid theirs down, as the Muslim Brothers did before them.

Still, the prospect of an Islamist Egypt, even by democratic means, is hardly appealing to all Egyptians, nor should it be to the citizens of Western liberal democracies who are appalled by the rampant brutality and corruption of the Mubarak regime. It is no use glossing over the historical record of Egypt's Islamist groups, nor of those movements that have come to power in Iran, Sudan and Afghanistan, where rights denied women and minorities are a preface of even worse things to come. "Living in a country run by the Islamists," says Hala Mustafa, "would be hell itself."

With the US invasion of Iraq, everyone will have to reckon with the consequences of the White House's most optimistic claims: that a democratic Iraq will make Arabs throughout the region demand the right to choose their own governments. One of the fortunate, though likely unintended, results of the war on Saddam Hussein is that if the government of the United States intends to bring self-determination to the Arabs, it no longer enjoys, as President Bush pointed out in his November 6 speech, the tacit prerogative to "excuse and accommodate" authoritarian regimes in the region. The United States is now on public record. And if Islamists do come to power in Egypt and elsewhere, the United States will need to draw on that account to assist real Arab reformers, real liberal democrats, legally and legitimately. ■

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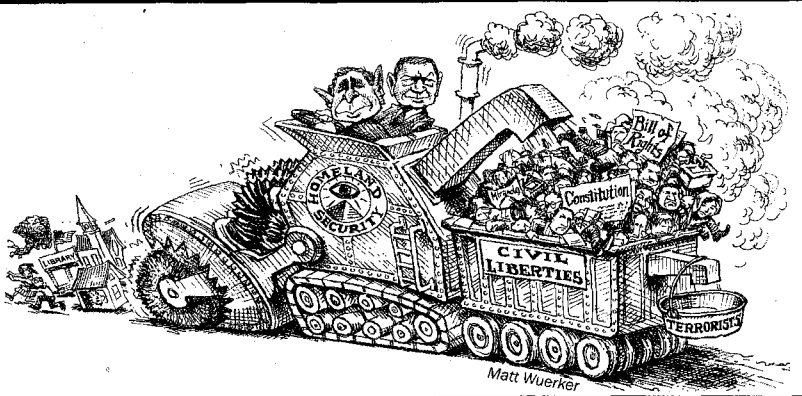

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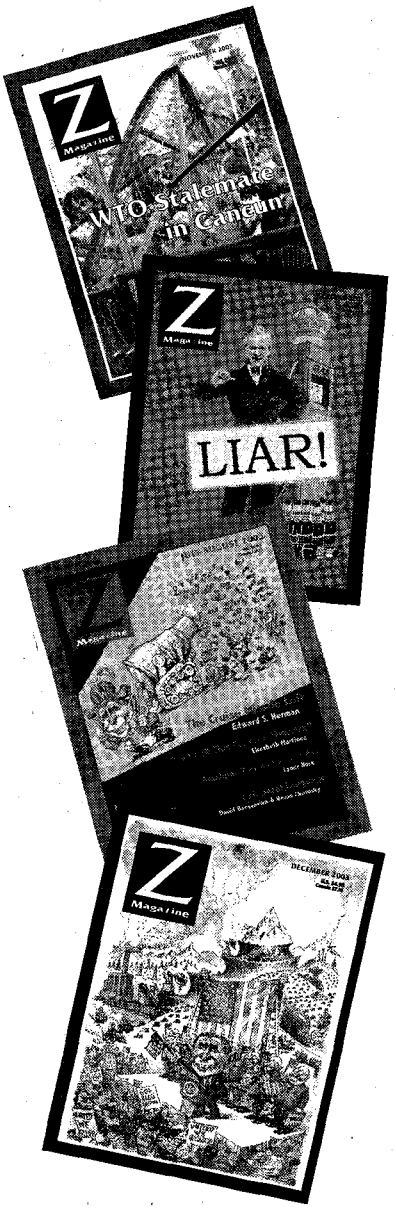

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IF 'NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND' MEANT WHAT IT SAID, IT WOULD OFFER HELP, NOT SANCTIONS.

Bush Flunks Schools

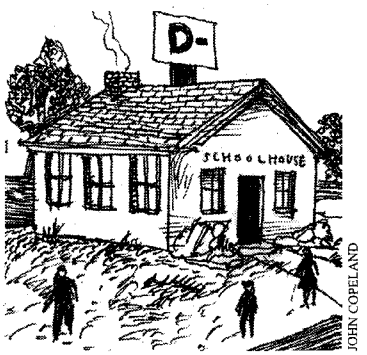
SUSAN OHANIAN

The ESEA [No Child Left Behind Act] is like a Russian novel. That's because it's long, it's complicated, and in the end, everybody gets killed.

—Scott Howard, former superintendent, Perry, Ohio, public schools

The Ohio Business Roundtable strongly supports the No Child Left Behind Act.

—Richard Stoff, president, Ohio Business Roundtable



At first, many people liked the sound of "No Child Left Behind," President Bush's education plan. Who could object? The press and the public responded positively to the sentiment—until the failure-to-measure-up labels started rolling in. But now, *New York Times* education columnist Michael Winerip says NCLB (pronounced "nicklebee") "may go down in history as the most unpopular piece of education legislation ever created."

Across the country, thousands of federal scarlet letters have been posted on schoolhouse doors. According to a Machiavellian federal formula, many schools well respected in their communities didn't make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). In Florida, only 22 percent of the schools earning A's under the state's ranking system received the NCLB imprimatur; overall, 87 percent of Florida's public schools were judged inadequate. NCLB wonks are quick to point out that nowhere in the law is the word failure used. True. But everybody reads the "in need of improvement" tag as a euphemism for failure. And schools "in need of improvement" are penalized, so the distinction is a sham.

Note that these labels apply only to public schools. Private and parochial schools are exempt from the same requirements—even when they receive vouchers paid for with public funds.

Under what is termed disaggregation, a scheme central to NCLB, kids are divided into subgroups, every one of which must show 95 percent test participation (and progress). Here are Minnesota's: All Students, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Black, White, Limited English Proficient, Special Education, Free/Reduced Priced Meals. It's true that in the past, schools could hide poor performance of, say, special-ed students by averaging it in with that of excellent students. Pulling out the subgroups creates what is called transparency. And that's fine, as far as it goes. But under NCLB, transparency is transmuted into school-bashing. In the words of the North Carolina State Board of Education, "A school's making AYP is an all or nothing prospect. A school will either have 'Yes' or 'No' in this field." One of Palo Alto's top high schools received a scarlet letter because some students skipped the test to study for AP exams.

And remember, this is all based on how some squirrely kids perform on a standardized test that neither the public nor the educators have a right to examine. In some states a teacher is subject to reprimand or dismissal if she even glances at it. Or tries to comfort a child sobbing over the test.

Multiply the subgroups by two, since all subgroups have to measure up in both reading and math, with science waiting in the wings. Every category must have 95 percent test-taker participation and show adequate yearly progress. In a small rural district, a couple of kids having an off day can cook a school's goose. In a large urban school, it doesn't take many more. A school can meet as many as seventeen out of eighteen target goals, and because this game is all or nothing, still be labeled failing. Ninety-four percent—and failing.

If No Child Left Behind meant what it says, it would help schools concentrate on that 6 percent, not cripple the whole school with an ugly label and crushing financial consequences. If even 6 percent of the bombast supporting NCLB was in touch with reality, they'd take heed of the American Society of Civil Engineers Report Card for America's Infrastructure, where public school buildings are ranked in worse shape than our bridges, transit systems and hazardous-waste disposal systems. Where's the Congressional breast-beating about this D-?

Of late, some Democrats have been saying they wouldn't have voted for NCLB if they'd known the Administration was going to skimp on funding. But to educators, this fiat for perfection looks like a gotcha setup; money or no, everybody will fail. As respected researcher Gerald Bracey puts it, NCLB is "a weapon of mass destruction, and the target is the public school system." Vermont Senator James Jeffords sees NCLB as "a back door to anything that will let the private sector take over public education."

If a school doesn't meet its AYP for two consecutive years, then it has to offer students the opportunity to go to a school with better scores, paying for the transportation costs. The Feds call this capacity-building; schools trying to meet already depleted budgets call it a crisis. Students with the lowest scores get first choice for moving, so consider this scenario: A receiving school's AYP is endangered by the incoming students, and the sending school's AYP improves just because they left. Then the bus can reverse direction, with the sending school becoming the recipient. Such a scheme looks at schools not as social institutions but as skill delivery systems. Already, there have been ugly incidents of cities not wanting to accept Somali refugees because they're worried about AYPs.

States must come up with a plan for achieving 100 percent proficiency by 2013–14, so they set up a grid: Oregon is typical, promising 40 percent proficiency in English/Language Arts in

Susan Ohanian, a longtime teacher, is a fellow at the Education Policy Research Unit at Arizona State University and at the Vermont Society for the Study of Education. She maintains a NCLB and high-stakes-test-resistance website at www.susanohanian.org.

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2002–03, jumping to 60 percent by 2007–08, 80 percent by 2011–12 and 100 percent by 2013–14. Note that they're putting off the utterly fantastic gains until the last years. Maybe they're counting on NCLB's self-destructing by then.

A July press release from the Business Roundtable quotes Joseph Tucci, chairman of the Roundtable's Education and the Workforce Task Force: "You can't manage what you don't measure. No executive can run a business without accurate, granular data that explains what's working and what's not. Our school systems should be no different." Keep those 8-year-old widgets rolling along the conveyor belt! But man does not live by granular data alone. Neither should children, though everywhere music, art and recess are being cut—to make room for more test prep.

Consider this: A Steinway grand has more than 12,000 parts, and a third grader's brain has about 100 billion neurons; but it's the Steinway that's acknowledged as unique, differing not only from all other piano brands but from all other Steinways. In an article celebrating the Steinway, James Barron says, "Perhaps it is the wood. No matter how carefully Steinway selects or prepares each batch, some trees get more sunlight than others in the forest, and some get more water. Certain piano technicians say uncontrollable factors make the difference." *Uncontrollable factors.* These days, piano makers may talk about uncontrollable factors, but no teacher or principal had better try it. With test-score numbers passing for accountability, "No Excuses" is the mantra for schools.

Ask any teacher and she will tell you how different is each third grader in her classroom. But the corporate-politico-media alliance long ago abandoned teacher judgments as "anecdotal," putting all their eggs in that granular data basket. Because the governor of Florida holds firm to a magic test score for every third grader—disregarding the kind of work they have done all year in class—he called on God, who has given children "the ability to gain this power and they haven't learned it," to justify holding back 43,000 of them. Maybe God was listening; this number was later reduced to 32,000. In the short term, retaining kids this year will make next year's AYP scores look better. But what about the long-term consequences? The relationships between retention, race and dropout rates are amply documented in research on retention. Hold ten students back a grade and only three will be around on graduation day; hold those students back twice and none will complete school. None. And African-American and Latino students are retained at twice the rate of white students.

Holding back third graders a year in school is said to be in the nation's self-interest. The hysterical tone harks back to the cold war rhetoric found in 1983's *A Nation at Risk*: "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war." Refusing to acknowledge evidence to the contrary, Business Roundtable bullies still talk this way about schools, and the national press lets them get away with it.

People are so used to thinking of issues as right wing and left wing that they often miss the business wing. Go to the Business Roundtable (BRT) website and you can download the NCLB Business Leaders Toolkit. In the name of preparing students for "the 21st century workplace," CEOs are urged to deliver the BRT-crafted messages to public officials, taking advantage of this "exceptional window of opportunity…[to] act strategically and with a common voice." The Roundtable cannot have missed the fact that this law, which will declare nearly all public schools failures, greases the skids for vouchers and privatization (though that danger appears to have escaped the law's Democratic supporters). NCLB also paves the way for school-to-work plans that have been sitting on the back burner ever since Clinton failed to get the national test he wanted. When school-to-work, which is a technology-based learning model training students for their place in the global economy (meaning school ends for some kids after tenth grade), is combined with NCLB-type open enrollment (in which kids revolve constantly from school to school), a marketplace model determines the relationship of people to schools. Which is exactly what business wanted in the first place. ■

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)

the corporate route need to add some incentive for someone to go into a store and shell out $15 for an album they could download for free. These incentives could include going back to the old days and crafting albums with a concept and clever cover art instead of just one hit song. Artists should take a lesson from the band Primus. They recently got back together and put out an album called *Animals Should Not Try to Act Like People*, which included a free three-hour DVD. The whole package costs only $10. Now that's incentive. JON GERBER

Long Beach, Calif.

■ Thanks to Eben Moglen for his excellent statement of the case for file sharing and against artificial shortages. I spent twenty years as a professional musician, and I assure you that only a tiny fraction of musicians make any significant income from the sale of CDs. Most musicians are paid only for the date on which they do the recording and do not receive royalties. And only a tiny fraction of musicians ever make it into the recording studio. Worldwide, the percentage of musicians who make significant income from the sale of CDs is so small as to be beneath consideration. Yes, some musicians make a lot of money from CDs. And some people make a lot of money from the lottery.

The fact is that musicians in the real world support themselves and their families the way they always have: They play gigs. This is good because, after all, recorded music is only a pale reflection of real, live, breathing music played by real live musicians. Nothing can replace it. So, if you're worried about how musicians will support themselves, drop a dollar in that guitar case in front of the street corner busker, go to the neighborhood coffeehouse and support that goofy bassoon and guitar duet, go to the nearest honky-tonk and kick up your heels, go to the symphony orchestra concert and soak up some gorgeous sounds. And keep sharing files. Boycott the RIAA! CLYDE FLOWERS

BASHING HEAD START—CHILD ABUSE?

Seattle

■ Jennifer Niesslein's superb "Spanking Head Start" [Oct. 20] sent me into a blind fury! As a retired laborer in the early-childhood vineyards, I can't bear to see the careful tending that has borne such promising fruit being bulldozed by brutes! Thanks and keep spanking where it's called for. PATRICIA MELGARD

CORRECTION

■ Because of an editorial error, Micah L. Sifry's "The Democrat–Green Death Struggle" last week said the Green Party's Matt Gonzalez made it into San Francisco's mayoral race. He actually made it to the runoff.

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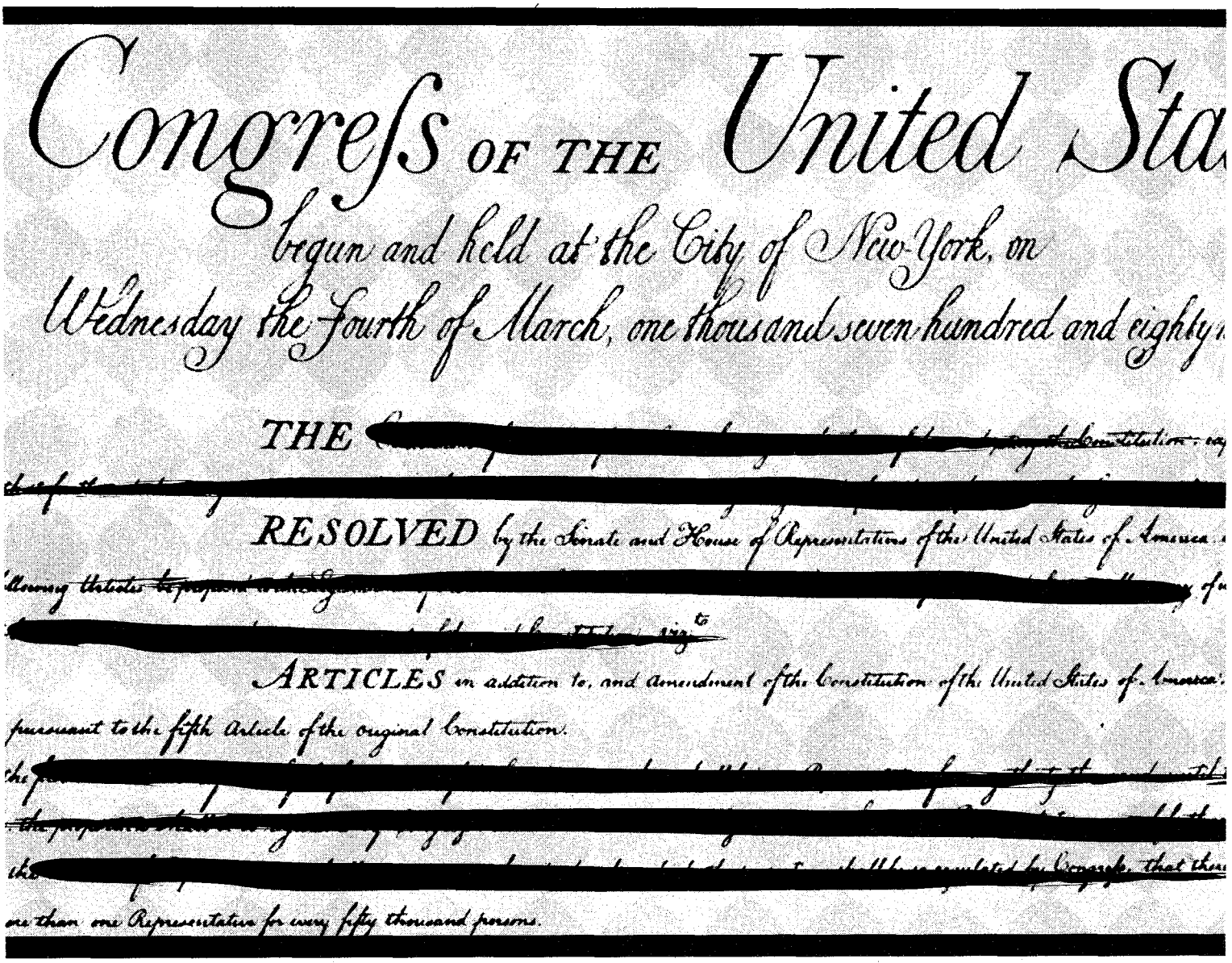
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BOOKS & THE ARTS

New York State of Mind

PHILLIP LOPATE

THE COLOSSUS OF NEW YORK: A City in Thirteen Parts.
By Colson Whitehead.
Doubleday. 158 pp. $19.95.

After two elegantly written, consistently engaging, critically praised, ambitious if not entirely satisfying novels, the prodigiously gifted Colson Whitehead has given the reading public every reason to follow his career closely. Now he surprises us with a perversely daring book—a series of thirteen meditative essays on New York, certainly a change of pace. Small enough to slide into your pocket, at 158 pages and 5" x 7" trim, it suggests the old companionate volume of Stevenson's or Thoreau's essays you might take along on a country hike. Except these are determinedly city-bound reveries. One way to think about them, in fact, is as a revival of the urban sketch.

In its heyday, the urban sketch was a byproduct of the concurrent rise of newspapers and population growth in metropolises. The public showed an increasing appetite for light essays, character sketches, vignettes and urban panoramas, which were to be found on the back pages, or *feuilletons*, of daily journals and magazines. Style was at a premium: The urban sketch was expected to be witty, effervescent and worldly—naïfs need not apply. Baudelaire, musing on the evolution of that "lyrical, supple" prose he envisioned for his prose poems, observed: "This obsessive ideal is above all a child of the experience of great cities, of the intersecting of their myriad relations." Rhapsodic, ironic, elegiac and disillusioned, the urban sketch, for all its sparkle, tended toward melancholy. Joseph Roth, a master of the form, characteristically began a piece on Berlin nightlife: "Sometimes, in a fit of incurable melancholy, I go into the standard Berlin nightclubs not to cheer myself up, you understand, but to take malicious pleasure at the phenomenon of so much industrialized merriment."

The urban sketch spread from England and the Continent to the United States: To take New York alone, such literary lights as Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Parker Willis, Margaret Fuller, Mark Twain, William Dean Howells, Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, Djuna Barnes, Paul Morand, Henry Miller, Christopher Morley, A.J. Liebling and Joseph Mitchell all tried their hand at such series, striving to capture the city's elusive soul. They make wonderful reading today. Still, the urban sketch fell into a decline, thanks to changes in literary taste, the drying-up of markets for belletristic writing and the suburbanization of America.

Rhapsodic, ironic and elegiac, the urban sketch has tended toward melancholy, and Colson Whitehead's essay is no exception.

Enter Colson Whitehead, gallantly taking up the form. Not that this writer hasn't always written about New York. His first novel, *The Intuitionist*, a witty, imaginative fantasy about an elevator inspector who doesn't need to look at the machinery to grasp its functioning, treated the city as a mythological, stylized backdrop of power and corruption, similar to Gotham in Tim Burton's *Batman* film. His second novel, *John Henry Days*, offered an engrossing, *Nashville*-like convocation of lost souls on the make in redneck America, with New York the fallback media-hype center, where freelance journalist and publicist bed in drunken mutual solace. But now he is treating New York directly as his subject matter, employing some of the classic organizing devices of the urban sketch, such as time of day ("Morning," "Rush Hour"), season ("Rain"), place ("Subway," "Central Park") and so on. It is moving to watch Whitehead patiently reworking these old tropes, fully conscious of his enterprise's antiquarian aspects. And he writes wonderfully, commanding a lush, poetic, mellifluous prose instrument.

Walter Benjamin said of the *flâneur*, that connoisseur of the boulevard, that the crowd "permeates him blissfully like a nar-

Phillip Lopate is the editor of Writing New York: A Literary Anthology *(Library of America) and the author of the forthcoming* Waterfront: A Journey Around Manhattan *(Crown).*

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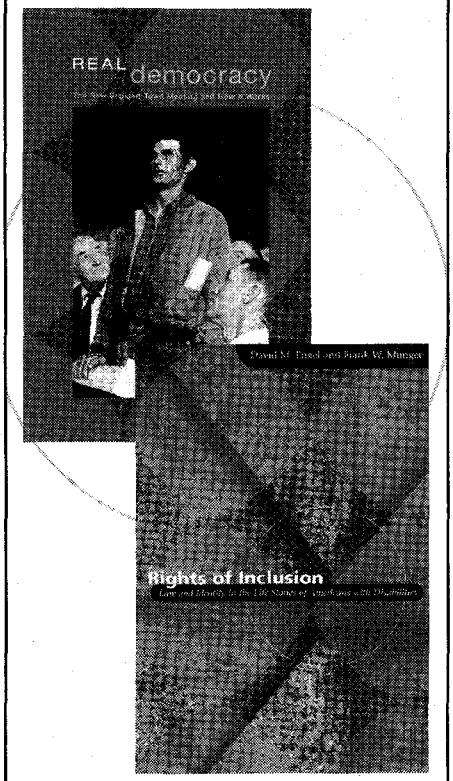

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cotic that can compensate for many humiliations." So it is with Whitehead. Like Whitman, he alights for a momentary line on this or that person's destiny. Like Joyce's Bloom, he wades into the city walk with attentiveness to interior sensations. The narrative "I" quickly yields to "he," "she," "you," "they"; and the willingness to inhabit speculatively, fictively, anyone who passes by makes these reveries a record of Here Comes Everybody. "Great day to be a caricaturist—everyone remembered to bring their faces," he quips. However, the passers-by are not so much physically described from the outside as their internal monologues are eavesdropped in on. What Whitehead really seems to be after is an inventory of the urban tribe's mass consciousness. While insisting that each citizen builds a "private New York" with "private landmarks" based on individual memories, he nevertheless keeps asserting a sort of group psychology, fabricated under stress.

Self-consciousness and chagrin form its core; loneliness, its baseline. "The loneliness is the worst," he writes, "because this knowledge is something that cannot be shared, only suffered. Just as well. Why should anyone have it easy. Spoken like a true New Yorker." There are nagging concerns about personal appearance: "Two drops of java on his shirt is enough to make the day unsalvageable." The open zipper and the zit make their appearance. Slush awaits the unwary pedestrian; closed trapdoors on sidewalks invite atavistic fears of falling, and "a multitude of stenches" brought by summer make for "discomfort without end."

Much of what Whitehead sees as the New Yorker's group psychology is a negotiation between conflicting responses and desires, neither ever fully accommodated. "Ire and compassion have been neighbors for years," he writes. A central pairing of dualistic traits is the opportunist and the stoic: First the New Yorker uses gamelike coping methods, which, when ineffective, yield to bemused resignation. In the subway, for instance:

> On the platform there are strategies of where seats will appear when...you get off, of how to outmaneuver these impromptu nemeses. So many variables, everyone's a mathematician with an advanced degree.... Can I make it to the seat before she gets there. Their eyes meet and they calculate distance. Stared down once again he gives up, such is his lot, and he leans against the conductor's door.

This pattern is repeated on a rainy day, trying to hail a taxi:

> All over town the available number of cabs shrinks as thin fingers tilt and quiver at the edges of traffic. The bastard one block upriver gets it before you can stick a hand out, just as you are someone else's bastard one block downriver. Epithets are tossed against the flow of traffic, upon the unbeknownst. Everybody just wants to get home, so they can make calculations and jockey. What's a better block for a cab. East or west, up a street or down. Schemes multiply and divide the longer you stand there. The supercomputer of cab-catching.

Yet some New Yorkers submit to their rained-on fate: "The best of them cease stooping, stand up straight, stop dodging, take it as it comes. Apparently they are supposed to get wet, so they give in. It is like letting go of something and a small miracle wrung from accident." He calls them, tongue-in-cheek, "citizens of a better city."

The typical New Yorker is portrayed as addicted to self-invention: on good days, the star of his or her own musical ("Dance over prostrate bodies as music swells"), on bad days, constantly adjusting ill-fitting masks. "Pull the next personality out of your back pocket. Maybe this one will work.... somehow you made it through the day without anyone finding out that you are a complete fraud." *John Henry Days* had explored this theme of fraudulence through its protagonist, J., a burnt-out African-American journalist who is going for the world record of public relations junkets. Whitehead, himself a Harvard-educated, acclaimed African-American writer, seems sensitive to the vanity of ambitions and the perils of inauthenticity and celebrity-hunger.

Though his two prior books had worried questions of racial identity, here he takes a perhaps-needed holiday from such concerns, making no mention of race. Nor is there much said, for that matter, about social class, or the economy that has so polarized New Yorkers in recent decades. Neither the rich nor the poor are in evidence, except for a few stray references to "the homeless," who are treated more as angelic presences than hard social facts. Whitehead seems intent on presenting the typical New Yorker as one coherent social construction: a lower-middle-class or middle-class city-dweller, subject to the democratically leveling discomfort of a debased public realm. Newcomers entering Port Authority bus terminal "are delivered into dinginess," a condition that is soon internalized: "His brain gets so dingy sometimes..." Occasionally the lonely millions experience a communal moment, like the first springy day in Cen-

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tral Park. But mostly, they are alone in their ill-at-ease responses. Like this anonymous woman Whitehead shows us crossing Brooklyn Bridge: "Remembering that disappointed feeling she gets each time she reaches the other side, then feeling that disappointed feeling."

Perhaps this anticipation of disappointment, which the author sees everywhere, is a way for big-city dwellers to gain a measure of control in the face of sensory overload. Perhaps, also, it helps to mute the frustrations of an eroticized city that offers so many squandered opportunities, crushes on passing strangers. "Probably not the right time for a sexual reverie but the view argues otherwise," Whitehead writes. His New Yorkers are always hiding unexpected erections or fantasizing about making out on a desert island with someone in the subway car. They are pulled out of the present into intimate sensual recall ("Her smell still on him"). Often the memory begins in pleasure and ends in rue: "So nice to wake to your spouse's hip but then remember last night's disagreement and decide you are still angry." The insistence on lament having the final word is also something Whitehead views as New York–tribal ("To complain is to belong, possess property") and consumerist ("Wait your turn, there's enough bitterness to go around").

When not divining the crowd's thoughts, he dives into the city's psyche, through anthropomorphizing metaphors. Since the crux of the charge against New York as neglectful parent is indifference, Whitehead stands the idea on its head: "Wouldn't it be funny if the city actually gave a damn about you.... The city knows you better than any living person because it has seen you when you are alone." An animistic imagination imparts to everything nonhuman its momentary voice: "The wind is a harsh critic, renowned for sardonic turn-of-phrase..." "The bridge pants, exhausted."

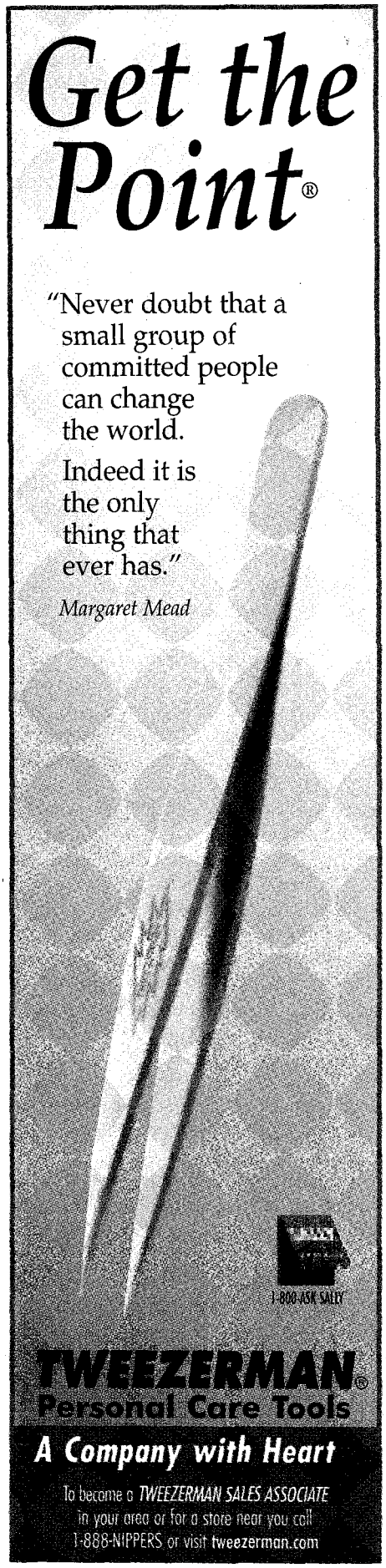
So accomplished are Whitehead's ironies, throwaway *aperçus* and inventive metaphors, that he is able to distract you for quite a while from the book's not going anywhere. It just keeps chasing its tail and repeating the same fanciful riffs. For this reviewer, the wondrous high began to wear off about two-thirds through the text. Then I suddenly realized all that was missing, that might have deepened or varied the experience for me. I mean things like history, physical description, analytical development.

First, history: There is none. Not only no mention of old mayors, such as Fernando Wood or Fiorello La Guardia, no references to the present political era of Dinkins, Giuliani or Bloomberg. No draft riots, no Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, no General Slocum steamboat disaster. Even our own colossus of anxiety, 9/11, is omitted, except in oblique references ("Fragile skylines are too easily destroyed"). If anything, 9/11 seems to have given the author permission to dispense with history, as if its trauma released the city into a posthistorical, statically anxious, "eternal" present. Or is he saying that the everyday stress of living in this city trumps any larger perspective that might incorporate the past and future? If so, I don't think that's true.

To be fair, Whitehead has an amusing riff in the opening section that explicitly denies historical reality: "History books and public television documentaries are always trying to tell you all sorts of 'facts' about New York. That Canal Street used to be a canal. That Bryant Park used to be a reservoir. It's all hokum. I've been to Canal Street, and the only time I ever saw a river flow through it was during the last water-main explosion. Never listen to what people tell you about old New York, because if you didn't witness it, it is not a part of your New York and might as well be Jersey." This is clever and almost finesses the problem, but I still think the book would have been enriched by some research. It is too much the work of an "intuitionist," trusting to a talent that, though immense, keeps leading back to the same effects.

Then there is the odd shying-away (in spite of the many sections titled with placenames like Broadway, Coney Island, Times Square) from actual, detailed physical description of these sites. Such descriptions might have balanced the tribal soup of interior monologue and offset its hydra-headed subjectivity with a single narrator's more objective viewpoint. However, to describe any city district's physical layers is to be plunged into a texture of historical names, old conflicts, research and all that other nonfiction "goop" that might interrupt the baritone sonorities of improvised lament.

Finally, one notes the author's chaste refusal to deepen analysis. He courteously includes any stray whim that floats through his mind, however original or trite, and lets it dart away without probing further. The method is faultlessly impressionistic, which works fine as a stream-of-consciousness fictional technique but is somewhat less availing in book-length nonfiction. A further problem is that this method allows him to elude full responsibility for any idea he presents, in the same way a novelist can say: "That was not my opinion, but the character's." So there is mentation without argumentation. A repeated device is the Barthelmean paragraph made up of shallow ra-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tionalizing fragments whose failure to add up induces a hip reader's weary smile. Example: "Wow, this crappy performance art is really making me feel not so terrible about my various emotional issues. He has to duck out early to get back to his bad art. Three cheers for your rich interior life, may it serve you well come rent day. Beer before liquor never sicker. This one's on me."

I wonder to what degree this reluctance to analyze further is generational. Whitehead's novelist contemporaries, such as David Foster Wallace and Rick Moody, who also grew up in the aura of postmodernism, often display a mocking, claustrophobic hyperreasoning that undercuts itself, in an unreliable-narrator manner, even when the writer turns to nonfiction. Underneath, it seems to me, is a lack of conviction that meaning is even possible, that anything makes sense, that individual perception is possible in this brainwashed age of pop culture cliché. The mind seems locked in its hamster cage, and the very effort to make sense leads merely to entering another dream, another self-deception. "People huddle into elevators and ride down into in-betweeness," writes Whitehead, "into the space between work and home that is a kind of dreaming: it's where they go to make sense of what just happened so they can go a little farther." What the average schmo comes up with, in the way of making sense, is usually mere self-justification: "All of them from every floor are crammed into this one subway car: the makers of memos, the routers of memos, indexers, filers and shredders of memos, the always-at-their-desks and the never-around.... Everyone thinks they are more deserving, everyone thinks their day has been harder than everyone else's, and everyone is correct." The cynicism is too facile, the superiority presumptuous and the sympathy too glib—all perennial dangers inherent in the book's prose strategy.

In channeling the urbanite's mass mind, Whitehead reproduces the era's clichés with sardonic enthusiasm, then pivots and provides his own all-purpose disclaimer: "Do not underestimate the will it takes to submit to cliché." This bon mot is immediately, and tellingly, followed by: "Follow the script. It's all make believe. Like happy endings." I am never sure whether such assertions by Whitehead as "it's all make believe" are an expression of spirituality or nihilism, Hindu enlightenment or cultural exhaustion. In Whitehead's earlier novel, *The Intuitionist*, we encountered the notion that everything might be *maya*, illusion: " 'They were slaves to everything they could see.' But there was a truth behind..." This *Matrix*-like idea that an alternate reality lurks just beneath the programmed one has both conspiratorial and theological connotations.

To Whitehead, New York is predominantly allegorical. It is the place where real and unreal merge. On the one hand, "the city is one substance, every inch of it from one end to the other. Solid. Immutable. Unbreakable." On the other, "it's not even what it was five minutes ago," hence, a Heraclitean conundrum. This mythicized city is part heaven, mostly hell, where the subway train "stops at ghost stations" in a "purgatory" that is easily equated with "the underworld," while, aboveground, a pedestrian "wrestles with a ghost for the soul of his umbrella." The city is simultaneously a juggernaut "operating on pure will," no longer needing humans to guide it, and a chimera. *The Colossus of New York* ends with this line, delivered from a departing plane: "The city explodes into view with all its miles and spires and inscrutable hustle and as you try to comprehend this sight you realize that you were never really there at all." So it was all a dream? That would explain why there's so little historical or physical detail in a book about New York. If it keeps changing from one moment to the next, what's the use of considering its past? If we are merely slaves to what we see, why bother with a description of Times Square?

While I find this too tricky, and Colson Whitehead's portrait of New York ultimately too abstract, maybe it's because I lack a taste for metaphysics and allegory. Like the author, I'm also a native New Yorker, but I can't set aside as easily its history or the hard planning decisions its present state requires. A reviewer should not fault a writer for neglecting to include what he intentionally left out. This little book is internally consistent, it does what it sets out to do and it is a brilliant tour de force of sorts. Still, I can't help feeling that a little impurity would have helped it. In the end, Whitehead has sacrificed range for uniformity of tone, and realism for epigram, and the result is smooth, dazzling, evocative, but also narrow and monochromatic. ■

ART

Visions of the Sublime

ARTHUR C. DANTO

EL GRECO

One of the great benefits conferred by Modernism on our appreciation of traditional painting is that there is little inclination any longer to ascribe optical abnormalities to artists whose representations of the human form depart from accepted norms. No one, for example, thinks for a moment that the attenuated figures of Giacometti are the result of deficits in the sculptor's eyesight, having learned in Modern Art 101 that his elongated figures symbolize the existentialist despair that inflected European consciousness at the time of World War II. The danger of Modernism is that we often look at what would have been perceived as distortions in traditional art simply as cases where the artists were ahead of their time—if we notice them at all. What appeared, before Modernism, as abnormal elongations in the paintings of El Greco were perceived after Modernism as the kind of expressive gestures viewers had learned to take in stride. El Greco, whose extravagant distortions made him seem beyond the pale before Modernism, appeared to Modernists as one of their own, and modern artists often found in him what they were seeking to achieve in their own art.

We no longer think El Greco must have been astigmatic, any more than that the early Modernists such as Matisse and Derain had to have been mad to paint as they did, unless they were having a joke at everyone's expense. But Modernism has perhaps overcompensated by suggesting that what our grandparents would have seen as abnormalities were merely, if we are formalists, determined by the exigencies of design, or else just had to do with the artist expressing the way he felt. This approach may blind us to meanings in the work to which the artist's contemporaries responded, and that shaped the works' reception in its own time. The chief critical challenge in addressing El Greco is to find a way

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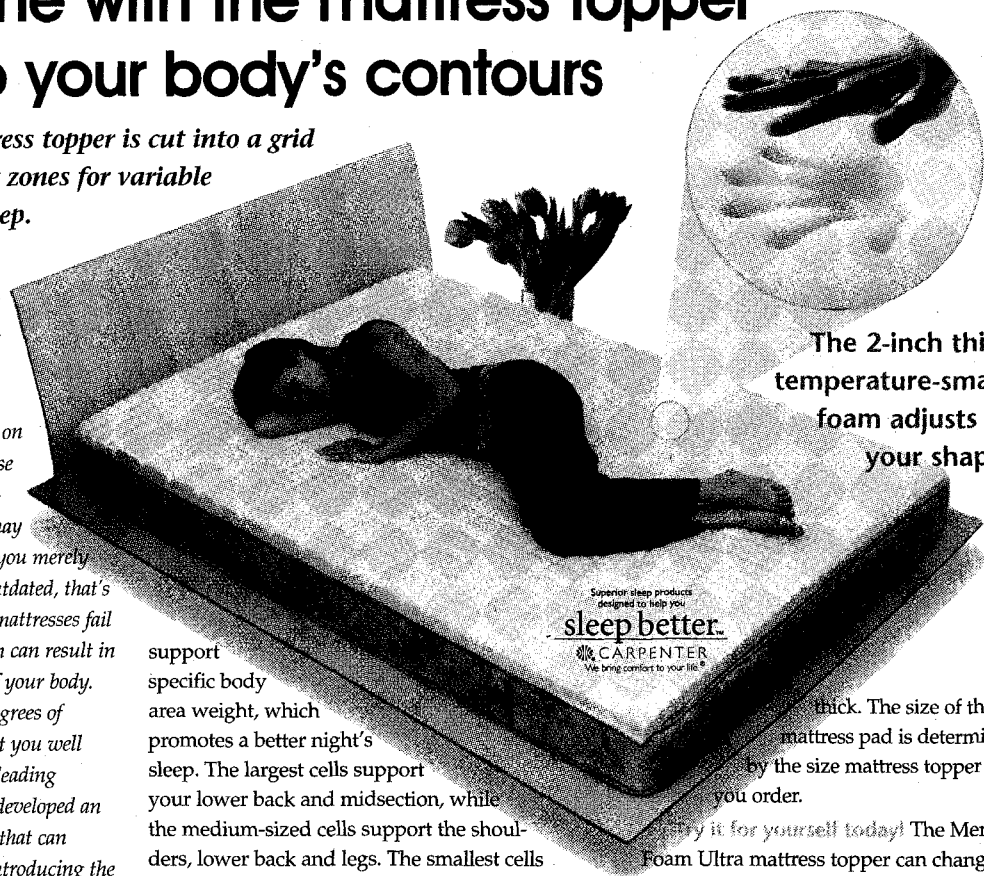

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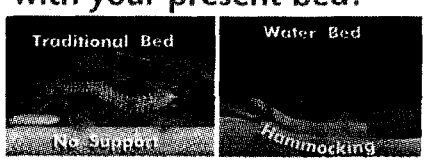

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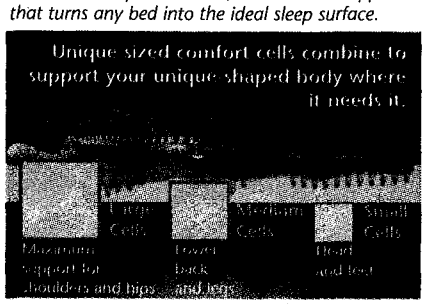
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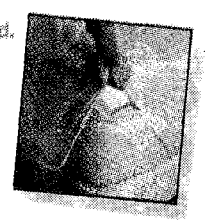

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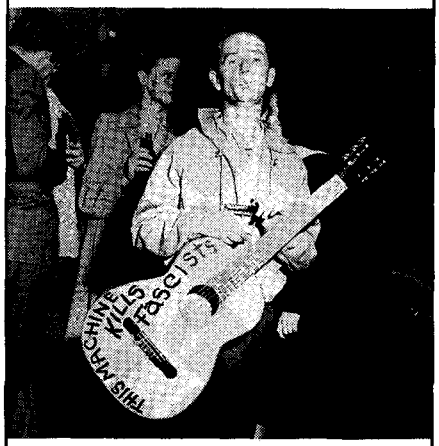

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of addressing him on his own terms.

Years ago I learned an argument from the cagey philosopher Nelson Goodman called the El Greco Paradox, which could perhaps be generalized to deflect any effort at explaining away deviations from presumed norms as the result of ophthalmic disorder. Goodman argued that if El Greco painted normally proportioned figures as elongated because he saw them that way, then we would see his painted figures as normally proportioned—and there will thus be no evidence in his paintings of abnormal vision. Some alternative account must accordingly be given for the elongations that are features of his mature style. I'm not sure the "paradox" was original with Goodman, but empirical psychology and art history tend to corroborate this conclusion. In a recent experiment (published in the journal *Leonardo*, under the headline "Was El Greco Astigmatic?") the psychologist Stuart Anstis transformed normally sighted observers into "artificial El Grecos" by having them look through a modified cylindrical telescope that stretched their images horizontally by 30 percent. When, with the other eye covered, his subjects tried to draw a freehand square from memory, they "drew a tall, thin rectangle elongated vertically by 35 percent." Instructed to copy actual squares, both original and copy looked to them like squat, wide rectangles. When one subject wore the El Greco telescope over one eye for two days with the other eye covered, her first drawn squares were 50 percent too tall, but she rapidly adjusted to optical distortion, and after two days she drew as if she had normal vision. So, Anstis concludes, might El Greco have adjusted, even if he was born astigmatic.

There is, in fact, no evidence of elongation in El Greco's early work at all, and while this is hardly the main thing to look for in the magnificent exhibition of his work on view at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art until January 11, the signature elongations begin to appear only when the artist was well along in his career and in his 40s. El Greco began as an icon painter in Crete, which at the time was under Venetian domination; and among the great surprises of the show are two recently identified paintings by him, one of the Dormition of the Virgin, the other of Saint Luke painting the Virgin and Child, both from the 1560s, and executed in Post-Byzantine style, under which optical abnormalities could scarcely be perceived. The Madonna and Child on St. Luke's easel has the look of an immemorial Greek Orthodox icon; the spatial placement of the easel shows that perspective was a distant rumor for the artist; draperies in both paintings are schematic and conventional. There would have been no way of identifying these works as his on stylistic grounds, and certainly no basis in them for predicting the course of El Greco's artistic odyssey. When these paintings were executed, the Renaissance in Italy had peaked, and its towering figures—Michelangelo, Raphael and Leonardo—had been dead for several decades. Italian art had entered its Mannerist phase, which was to last until nearly the end of the century, and the beginning of the Baroque. Relative to the extreme sophistication of what we may think of as mainland art, El Greco was a pretty backward artist, but with ambitions fueled by the presence in Crete of Venetian tastes and values. He traveled to Venice sometime after the putative date of the Cretan icons, and not long after that traveled to Rome, probably stopping in such towns as Parma and Verona en route, where Mannerism was in full flower.

I have always wondered why El Greco is not considered a Mannerist painter, for he took certain of the defining attributes of that movement to the point of extremity. Mannerism was a reaction against idealized naturalism, the glory of the High Renaissance. It created a style of elegant artificiality, embodied in the strange elongations we find, for example, in the figures of Parmigianino and Rosso Fiorentino. Heads were disproportionately small, faces stylized, pictorial space reinvented, and an overall imperative of refined exaggeration governed artistic invention. It was as if there was an agenda of deconstruction, in which the discoveries of the Renaissance were reconfigured to create pictorial fantasies rather than painstaking transcriptions of visual reality.

To get some sense of what could have caused so monumental a transformation in painting, we have to look beyond the frame of art history. Clearly, the cause of this astonishing rebellion in figuration was the trauma Catholicism had suffered in the wake of the Reformation. The reaction took the form, in art, of spiritualizing the depiction of human flesh. The values aimed at in depicting the human body entailed replacing anatomical correctness with spiritual truth. Imagine painting the narrative episodes of the Christian epic—the Annunciation, the Adoration, the Last Supper, the Resurrection, the Last Judgment—using figures whose proportions were met at best by *Vogue* models, instead of the solid peasant types who had given Renaissance art its reassuring familiarity. The story no longer

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seemed as if it had taken place in a world just like ours, but rather in a visionary atmosphere resembling an image of our world seen in a convex mirror. Mannerism was a first stage in the Counter-Reformation, which became full-blooded in the Baroque at the end of the century, when Rome became the center of artistic patronage, and all the previous centers were transformed into cultural provinces.

El Greco turned himself into a Mannerist in the course of his Italian sojourn. One can study this transitional period in his evolution in the Metropolitan's own *Christ Healing the Blind*, of about 1565. So little is it in the distinctive style El Greco was to achieve, that it was attributed to Tintoretto and, as late as 1958, to Veronese. Such works demonstrate that whatever refractive errors may have troubled him, nothing in the painting would have encouraged an inference of astigmatism. But the painting is full of early Mannerist eccentricities. It is almost choreographed, with two groups of figures on either side of the stage. A "backdrop" shows an immense piazza in deep spatial recession, lined by arcaded buildings in flawless perspective. One group surrounds a quite normally proportioned Jesus, touching the eyes of a kneeling blind man. The other group shows figures responding to the miracle with the extreme melodramatic gestures that were to become the body language of the Baroque—the pictorial sign of personages witnessing miraculous events. One man points to Jesus' intervention as if to say, Behold!—while another, still doubting Jesus' claim to divine powers, holds his hands out as if to repel the sight. There is an anomalous figure, tentatively identified as a second blind man just restored to sight, shown from behind pointing upward. How, after all, does one represent someone who sees for the first time? But he may not be a cured blind man at all—Mannerist art often included figures that added to the dramatic excitement without being part of the narrative. In a second version, a witness looks upward at what the figure is pointing to, as if something astonishing were taking place offstage.

El Greco did not become "El Greco" until he moved to Spain, sometime before October 1576, nor did he use that mongrel nickname—a Spanish prefix and the Italian word for "Greek"—as his signature. He always signed his paintings with his Greek name, Domenikos Theotokopoulos, using Greek characters. But he also became El Greco, in the sense that he became an artist whose affinities to Mannerism are merely external, since his elongations came to express meanings internal to a vision that he could at that date have acquired only in Spain. They were no longer, to use the term in its slightly pejorative sense, mannerisms. In my view, the Italian period was one of learning how to paint in the advanced style of the era. He mastered perspective, anatomy, chiaroscuro and a kind of pictorial chic. But nothing especially set him apart from the pack, and though he had backers and patrons, and received portrait commissions in Rome, he was not a huge success there. Paintings such as *The Purification of the Temple*, from the same period as *Christ Healing the Blind*, show the sort of ambition that drove him, but they were never underwritten by important commissions. *The Purification* shows an irascible Jesus, driving not just money-lenders but courtesans and other vessels of impurity out of holy precincts with a knotted flogger. (There is even a *traif* still life in the foreground, consisting of oysters and rabbits.) I was interested to read that one of El Greco's patrons told him of the success Sofonisba Anguissola—the female prodigy from Cremona—had had in Spain as tutor to the queen. In any case, his work was not a hit in Madrid, but he was commissioned to execute an altarpiece in the Cathedral of Santo Domingo el Antiguo

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in Toledo, where he was to spend the remainder of his life, becoming, as they say in New Age psychology, who he was. It was through finding an artistic product that satisfied the spiritual needs of this community that this came about.

I say "needs" rather than "tastes," for it was not a simple matter of aesthetic preferences that gave him an advantage in Toledo. Toledo was at the center of the Counter-Reformation in Spain, and my sense is that El Greco invented a visual language that suited this spirit in a way that no one else had imagined. Mannerism was wedded to a kind of mysticism in his work, and rather than creating simply an alternative naturalism, he created a vision of a supernatural universe in which the Christian narrative was presented as visually momentous. Consider the extraordinary *The Crucifixion With Two Donors* of 1580. The donors—a priest with his palms pressed together and a nobleman with his right hand pressed to his heart—are cropped at the waist by the lower edge of the canvas. The cross, bearing Christ crucified, rises, or rather soars upward between them, so their eyes are at the same level as Christ's feet. Christ is elongated and slender, and depicted almost in the pose of a dancer, his perfect body, barely wounded, made luminous by a light from above. It is as though the agony that Christ should be feeling has been transferred to the world through the drama of heavy, backlit clouds: There seems no boundary between earth and sky, which express the kind of crashing upheaval of a storm at sea. The donors' faces express wonderment and awe.

I have borrowed these last two terms from Kant, who uses them to describe the experience of the sublime. Sublimity was not to figure in the vocabulary of aesthetics or art criticism until the latter part of the eighteenth century, but whether or not there was a word for it in El Greco's Spain, it was what the spiritual appetite of the artist's patrons demanded. Ecstasy is the condition of being moved by powers too great for the mind to contain, and Christ's body in El Greco's *Crucifixion* expresses the order of ecstasy to which Counter-Reformation Catholicism aspired in Toledo. It is ecstasy that Saint Teresa of Ávila—El Greco's contemporary—sought in her devotions and described in her writing. One might say that El Greco invented the sublime in advance of the concept, and his elongations were among his means. They serve, or rather extend, the standards of sense to activate the faculty of mind in his viewers that his saints express in their bodies.

This, it seems to me, is the way to think about the masterpieces you will see in this great exhibition—about *The Opening of the Fifth Seal*, about the astonishing *Laocoön*, about *The Virgin of the Immaculate Conception* and certainly about the ecstatic landscape of Toledo itself. Toledo, indeed, figures in both these latter paintings, as if to imply that the city is internally related to the immense spiritual convulsions that take place in the sky above it or, in the case of *Laocoön*, writhing with his sons in the grip of two serpents on the slopes outside its walls. Once one sees the logic in El Greco's representations relative to the anticipated mood of his primary viewers, everything else falls into place: palette, pigment, brushwork, proportion, the dimensions of his canvas, the size of the eyes, the direction of gaze, the twist of the body, the ferocity of gesture.

The sublime was something that before El Greco belonged to poetry and to music in their highest expressions, and ecstasy to dance and tragic performances. It was his achievement to bring it into the visual arts. But his genius was made possible by the histories of painting and of religion flowing into each other. When, by the time of Kant, the sublime emerged as a conscious aesthetic goal, everything had become finally too secular for it to get off the ground as an artistic reality. It was only with Abstract Expressionism that, in Barnett Newman's phrase, the sublime was "now" once more. It was a clever thought of the exhibition's organizers to install some studies after El Greco by Jackson Pollock at the entrance to their exhibition. Pollock copied them from plates in art books, but he knew they held something that New York Modernism thirsted for—an abstraction beyond geometry, transcending the bounds of taste. ■

2003 Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize

The Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize of $25,000, awarded annually for the most outstanding book of poems published in the United States by an American, is administered mutually by the Academy of American Poets and The Nation. *In the past decade, winners have been Madeline DeFrees (2002), Fanny Howe (2001), David Ferry (2000), Wanda Coleman (1999), Mark Jarman (1998), Robert Pinsky (1997), Charles Wright (1996), Marilyn Hacker (1995), W.S. Merwin (1994), Thom Gunn (1993) and Adrienne Rich (1992). This year the award goes to Eamon Grennan for his* Still Life with Waterfall *(Graywolf). Jurors were Andrew Hudgins, Judith Ortiz Cofer and Robert Wrigley, who contributed the following essay. Other finalists for the award were* Dance and Disappear, *by Laura Kasischke (Massachusetts);* Starting from Sleep, *by Charles Martin (Overlook);* The Lives of the Saints, *by Suzanne Paola (Washington);* Bellocq's Ophelia, *by Natasha Trethewey (Graywolf); and* Skid, *by Dean Young (Pittsburgh).*

In the classic or traditional "still life," that which is represented is, by definition, still. It is usually inanimate, even. Thus the still life will include not only the fruit and the cup, the knife and the cutting board, but the killed pheasants awaiting their dressing out. A wing from one of the birds may sprawl rigorously up and out, but the sensation the painting creates is not one of flight or even of the potential of flight, but of repose and of waiting. Waiting, that is, for the return, the participation, the full involvement of the human being the picture implies. What is often most beautiful about the still life is the feeling that one is brought to a regard far beyond one's own sensory capabilities. You pause, in a way, and enter another human's world. You "see" with the artist's eye that sweat of heavy condensation on the goblet or the pear, and you enter into a stillness in your own life. Time stops. If you're lucky, you can look up momentarily disoriented by all that has shot by you in that suspended moment. The blessing of the art is in the time we do not spend.

Such a suspension of time is what the lyric poet means to conjure. I am tempted to say "ignite," for as much as anything else the lyric moment, that free time the painter and the poet offer us, is a kind of arc flash of recognition. We hardly need to elaborate on it; it is simply present and instantly as true as the world at hand. Or better yet, truer, clearer, held still for our taking in, our

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entering into. The figure of this sort of ignition is also one that the poet Eamon Grennan, in his marvelous book *Still Life with Waterfall*, recipient of the 2003 Lenore Marshall Poetry Award, is very fond of. Whether it is the future, with its "red eyes whispering," or a "sun-splash of feathers/ falling through the skylight," what is illuminated is caught and held for a reader to savor. Grennan would have us know—no, would have us see, feel, hear, taste and smell—that the world, moment by ordinary or agonizing moment, lies chock-full with its own clarifications and rewards. That such rewards most often go unnoticed keeps the artists in business, so to speak, and if there is anything more likely to open us to the savor of life than poems like Grennan's, I can't imagine what it might be.

Still Life with Waterfall is Eamon Grennan's sixth collection of poems, and its title suggests immediately the nature of this poet's enterprise. How delightful and odd to find in the midst of such a production of repose as a "still life" the constant motion of a "waterfall." In a sense this is the poet's homage to painters (the book's cover is a vividly colorful detail from Pierre Bonnard's *Sunset*; two poems in the collection speak directly of Bonnard; another features an epigraph by him; still another poem speaks of Vermeer; and there is yet one more titled "Painter's Diary"); however, the title also implies something of a linguistic trump. That is to say, Grennan proves that his still-life lyrics are indeed capable of movement, or at least that they can pluck from a world, or a life, in blinding motion, a slice clear enough to make us shudder with satisfaction. Sometimes it is the motion in that slice that electrifies.

Consider the poem "Enough." The speaker, walking along an Irish marsh, spots the very fox he has for days or weeks or months been seeing the tracks of. It is only a "glimpse," but it is "enough" to see the fox's "ears, plump sides, rump and bushy tail/vanishing." There is a seeing-is-believing kind of validation for the speaker in this momentary vision—the imagery of the poem is almost entirely visual—but tellingly, it is Grennan's abundant sensory details that make the reader see the fox's tracks, "the marks only/of his absence," as more than they might otherwise seem. The speaker, after all, comes nearest to the animal by walking in those tracks. This is where the speaker takes in, for example, "the smell of him," followed immediately by the poem's most remarkable visual image: the fox's "neat prints filling with sand." Whether it is dry, windblown sand or

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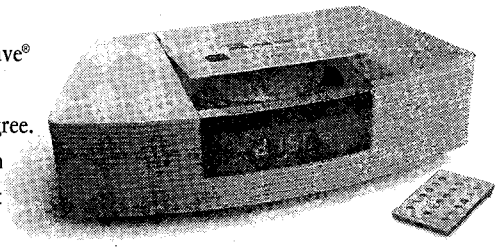

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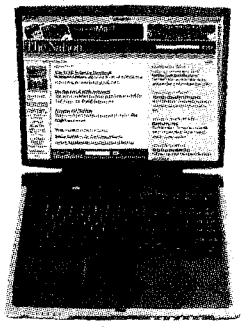

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wet, heavy, falling sand is immaterial. What we see is the ongoingness inside the static image. It is the motion of the waterfall and the perfect segue out of the lyric poem back into the flow of life and time. The absence of the fox on the page itself is so immediate, the reader too is touched by its passing.

Poem after poem in *Still Life with Waterfall* is emblazoned with such experiences caught and held and allowed to move on. What also happens as one reads the book is that one becomes aware of what I'm tempted to call the larger lyric moment. The collection suggests something very much like a narrative of a life—complete with love and loss, heartbreak and mortality. Reading this book, one feels the motions and obsessions of a quest: In his seeking after the moment, this poet seeks also something elemental about the human being, about the human soul. The opening poem, "At Work," describes the flight of a marsh hawk over the grassy fields. When the bird sees "the slightest aberration, any stir/that isn't the wind's," it falls on its prey. What follows in the poem's second stanza is a graphic description of that prey's devouring: "severing the head first,/then ripping the bright red strings that keep the blood in check,/then eyes, gizzard, heart, and so to the bones, cracking/and snapping each one." That the poem is a trope for any sort of animal life, including a human's, is both clear and commonplace. Of each snapping bone, the poet observes that it had "moved so swift and silent/and sure of itself, only a minute ago, in the sheltering grass."

By the end of the book, by the final poem, another predatory bird (this one a sparrow hawk) plucks a finch-chasing robin right out of the air. This sort of book-ended framing is risky and important, for in that last poem, Grennan gives us something close to both an *ars poetica* and an *ars vita*. "I began to understand," he says, "how a poem can happen: you have your eye on a small/elusive detail, pursuing its music, when a terrible truth/strikes and your heart cries out, being carried off."

Grennan's poems are the hawks, and we are the hawks. We are the prey, as is the poet. This is the kind of poetry that makes you more alive, more alert to your own bones and birds. Stay alive, it says. Listen. See.

There is hardly a poem in *Still Life with Waterfall* that does not offer as its triggering subject or as its structuring imagery the things of the natural world. You will find a field guide full of birds; dazzling meadows full of flowers; sun, moon, stars, rocks and the sea. If you do a little sniffing after reviews and commentary on Grennan's work, you will almost certainly find him called "a nature poet." He may be comfortable with the term, but to me the phrase, attached to any writer worth reading, is silly and diminishing. Beyond the implication that there is something unnatural about poets whose work does not include an amplitude of images from the planet we all share, there's a brand of almost willful nonsense in the term, since most often it seems content to catalogue a poet's work merely by counting the "things" that show up in it, rather than examining why those "things" are deployed. It is the sort of literary classification an accountant might invent.

Eamon Grennan's natural world bears a significant similarity to the late, great Theodore Roethke's. He is less boisterous (or even barbaric) than Roethke, but like Roethke, his attention to the natural world is a way of looking out in order to see inside. The subject may be as personal as romantic

In Memoriam

BEVERLY L. DANIEL

A true lefty who worked for peace and social justice
and
A wonderful grandmother, sister and mother to us all.

We love you and will carry on the good fight.

Josh, Sean, Emily, Ruthie, Lily, Ruby, Quincy, Jo

EVENTS

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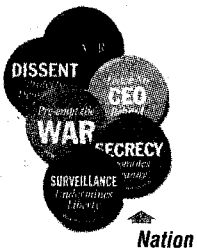

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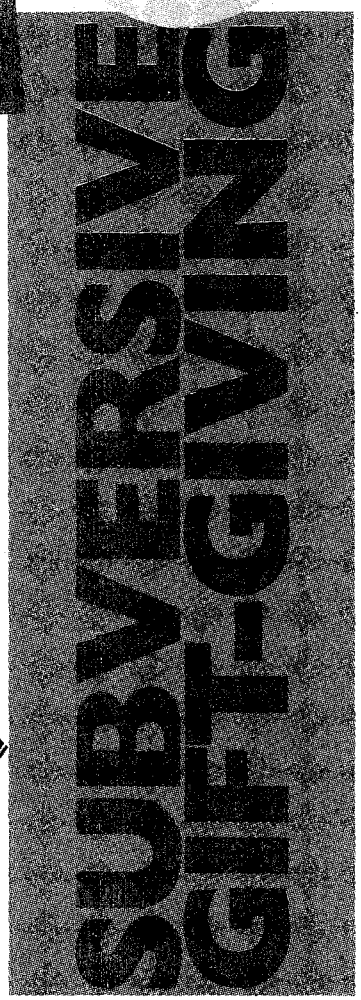

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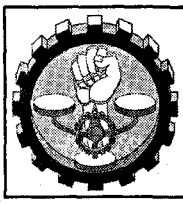
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loss or disillusionment or nostalgia, but Grennan will find in the natural world the imagery to make such feelings palpable to a reader. He understands the human animal may be little different from the common wild or domesticated animal. It may be that all there is that separates human and animal is less love, for example, than it is the language that makes of love our most powerful abstraction, though Grennan, like Keats, admires and envies, even, the purity of emotion and expression in a bird's singing. In a poem that deftly conflates two birds singing in a leafless ginkgo and a pair of lovers in a room so cold they could see their breath, Grennan notes that the lovers' breath "at blood-heat/[frosts] the windowpane,/blinding its clear unlying eye." It is the window looking out on the singing birds, not the lover's eye, that does not or cannot lie. And the poem, which grieves nostalgically for such a moment when the lovers were warmed by their love alone, ends with the following line. It is perfectly ambiguous which pair—birds? lovers? both?—the operative pronoun, "they," refers to, or whether the adjectives are literal and birdly, or figurative and human: "Such sharp songs they had, and clear green throats."

In 1963, I was 12 when "the British Invasion" accelerated to full speed, with the Beatles appearing on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Forty years have passed, and my children find the Beatles charming and quaint, "kind of like Bach," my daughter says. If there has been an "Irish Invasion" in American poetry, it has come at a much slower pace. An "infiltration" might be the better term, though I think I'd prefer something more like "a welcoming." We are, however, clearly blessed with the presence (or regular presence) of a number of Irish poets of great distinction, from the titanic Seamus Heaney, through the dazzling and urbane Paul Muldoon, to the fierce and passionate Eavan Boland, among others. I would add to this list, as a simple matter of filling out a sort of "Fab Four" of Irish poets in the USA, the name Eamon Grennan. All four are decidedly different: Grennan does not so often employ Heaney's references to Irish history, and compared with the delirious formal jazz of Muldoon, his poems are restrained. It might be the time Grennan has spent here—thirty years, according to the biographical note in this book—but I would suggest that Grennan is, in a way, the least demonstrably Irish of this quartet. It is not that his poems are less musical than we might expect of an Irish poet (nor of any other English-writing poet with an exemplary ear). They are often lavish with music ("buff-colored heifers up to their bellies in buttercups"). It's not that he never speaks of Ireland; a number of the poems in this book take place at Renvyle, in the north, where he spends his summers. Nor is it that he speaks any more frequently than Muldoon, say, of this country. Finally, it is not that his poems seem any more "American," whatever that might mean. Rather, it is that Grennan's poems, in my opinion, possess a kind of pure and purifying statelessness. They are of the places in which he lives on this planet. They could be of almost anywhere on the planet—momentary, powerful, evocative and rewarding.

In Eamon Grennan's poems, in his world, we enter a place where "itch begins to rhyme with ache." These words are something we understand in English, but the concept, I believe, goes all around the world.

—Robert Wrigley

At Work

On slow wings the marsh hawk is patrolling
possibility—soaring, sliding down almost to ground level,
twisting suddenly at something in the marsh hay or dune grass,
their autumnal colours snagging his eye
where he finds the slightest aberration, any stir
that isn't the wind's, and abruptly plunges on it.

Then,
if he's lucky—and that scuttling minutiae of skin and innards,
its hot pulse hammering, isn't—he will settle there
and take in what's happened: severing the head first,
then ripping the bright red strings that keep the blood in check,
then eyes, gizzard, heart, and so to the bones, cracking
and snapping each one—that moved so swift and silent
and sure of itself, only a minute ago, in the sheltering grass.

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Man Making the Bed

Psalm after psalm into a dead sea of silence: they invite
their own enormous, endangered day. Scalded, lord,
by sunlight and the lizards watching, licking dust,

he unfolds the fresh sheets: brisk sniff of laundry, white
as a field of Queen Anne's lace. The word "linen"
comes to rest, a cleansing breath, and a big sail bellies

in the breeze he conjures, speaking its memory of flax and water,
acres of raw linen in the Low Countries or the black North
laid out like a waiting canvas, a picture-glimpse of heaven

with a few shriven women's bodies adrift in it, dazzled
by its dear, old-world, breathing spaces. He billows the sheet
and a wondercloud swells in this small room, a huge

snow-ruffle drifting down, a tabernacle of cool white
rising in the desert. Here is the bed new made, and here
its play of flesh and spirit, unsettling themselves in bodies.

He is alone here, making the bed up, stopped
between the solidity of things as they are and the huge white peace
of the sheet-sail flapping from his hands for a matter of seconds

and subsiding, spread flat, its corners pointed
towards where she leans—half-dressed in memory,
one soft stroke of daylight streaking her spine—

to draw taut the sheet he's holding the other side of
and they snap together, lay flat, tug it tight together
in what looks like a fullness of time and truth

and not plummeting asunder. Lying alone
between the sheets tonight, feeling the clean of them,
their white arms tight around him, he will dream

a wilderness of tents in moonlight: asleep,
they will be shivering a little, as if they felt the stars
press their chill rivets in, or the future

with red eyes whispering to rouse them.

Full Moon

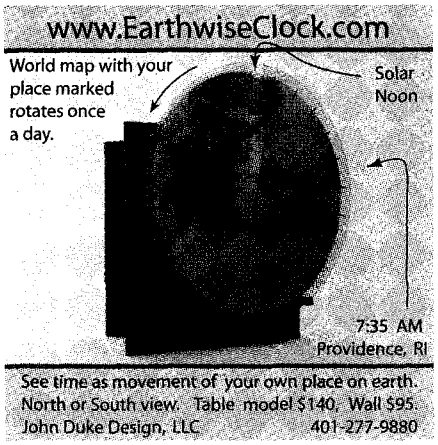
Clouds curdle round it, crack open, let it through.
Radiance shades by cloudshapes; fat fruit
of incandescence; sphere of peeled silver. I wonder

what living by such light would be: soft
collusion of moonshine with grey gables; walls
in a whitewashed trance; argentine grass; twigs

limned in pewter. Ambition and rage all faded
from the air, the air subdued to a new sense
of self, something intimate and sure about the way

it whispers subtle truths neighbour to neighbour—
or how its ashen luminescence slides inside things
so they shed the cinder skin of what goes on

day by day in daylight, and start breathing.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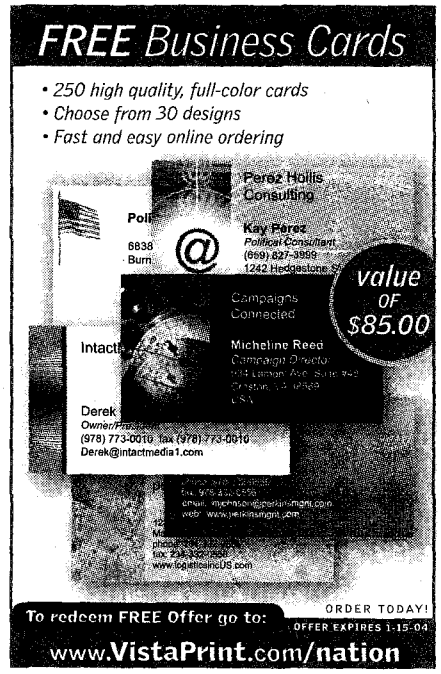

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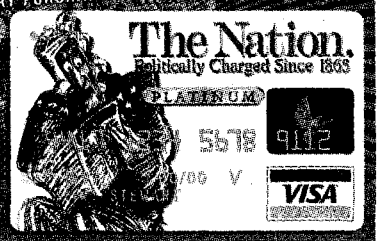

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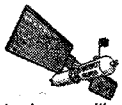

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PUZZLE NO. 2917

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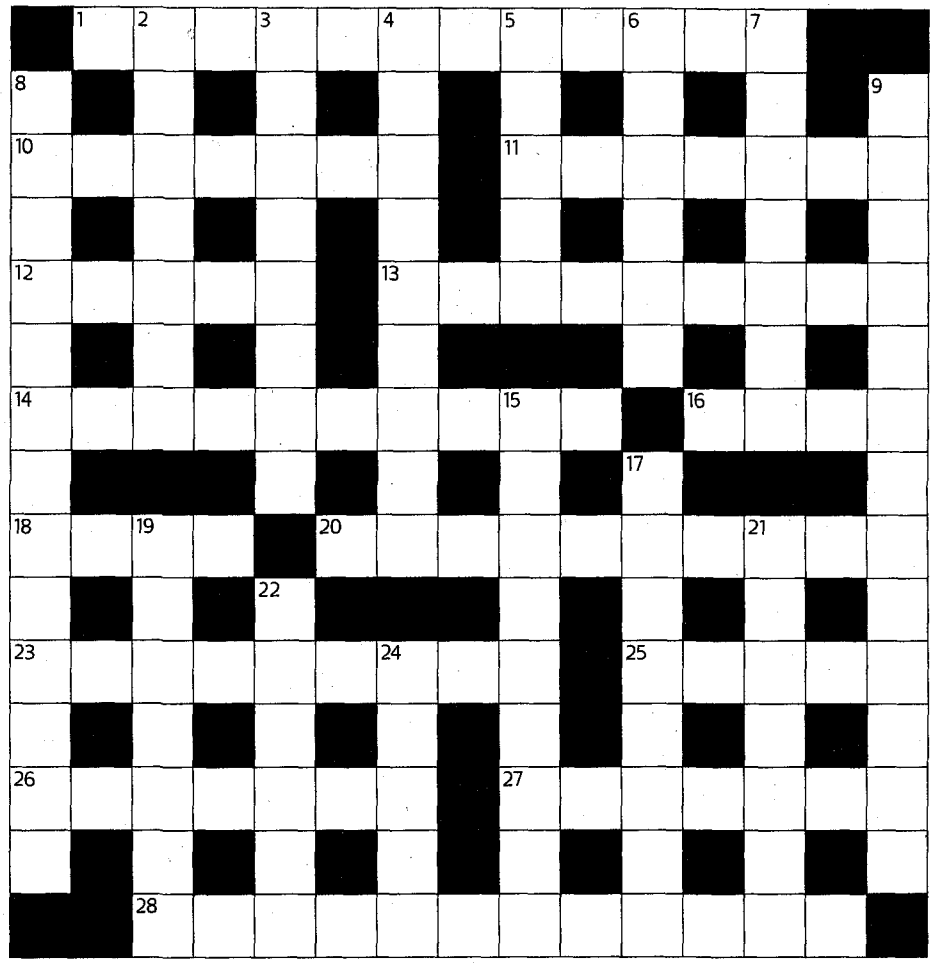


ACROSS

1 Contract to rent a certain kind of auto, for people who are very choosy? (4,2,6)

10 How the regally inclined refer to their person or to an unruly sour pixie? (7)

11 Definitely says no, but polishes things up again. (7)

12 Steals, as the Cockney says, certain small cuts. (5)

13 The sort of sale that features patent cane construction. (9)

14 On the outside, it's forever about a kiss, as some write. (10)

16 A foreign town celebrated by a great gate in exhibited pictures. (4)

18 I'm returning a couple of times to see the lady who has notably cold hands. (4)

20 A dangerously striking creature I would give one star, possibly in the garden. (10)

23 Supposedly not a good place to change steeds, but it's not very bright to come back to such a bad master. (9)

25 The opposite of 5 down describes beer, according to the Bard. (5)

26 Digs up a sex problem about a onetime TV commentator. (7)

27 Is this what belongs to a girl in a bad seat—for a girl? (7)

28 Might they protect the property and march about with a striking sign referring to those who take stolen goods? (6,6)

DOWN

2 A crazy pair on the place of repose might look good enough to eat. (7)

3 Wardrobe attendants have what it takes to stow away a few of your personal items. Fancy ones are typified by Brummell. (8)

4 One doesn't get on here in Paris and then in Berlin, but they serve as arbiters in the games. (9)

5 A bad glare and plenty of it! (5)

6 and **17** Victoria's associate had just a single beer of the German variety, being responsible for some rather heavy thinking. (6,8)

7 Mr. Turk has a point, with a very loud sign to finish one. (7)

8 One of those who started the group seems to struggle in the water with an arm or a leg showing. (7,6)

9 Evidently the star of the performance has put on weight, comparatively speaking. (2,5,2,4)

15 Only a part of the theme song, which starts with a bunch of flowers, confusing Tom with a fit which is unfit. (9)

17 See 6 down

19 Where a naval cadet evidently gets place. (7)

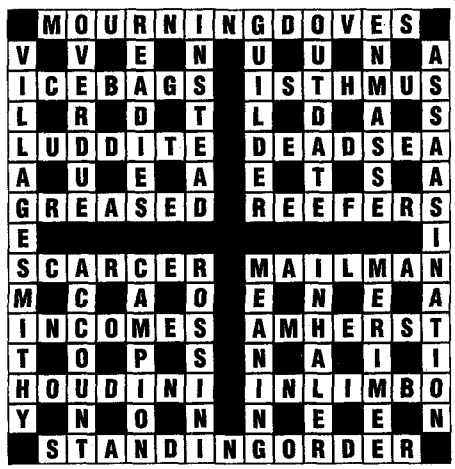
21 One on this was an easy flier. (7)

22 Thumb possibly stuck in what the investigating agency comes up with, describing something with a lot of power. (6)

24 The way things happen when you and I come up in such a direction. (Dash on, girl from Sioux City!) (5)

PUZZLED? No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules" send for those of Mr. Lewis to: Puzzled, The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003, or access our website at www.thenation.com/about/crossword.mhtml.

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 2916



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Lighting Technology for eye comfort

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The Balanced Spectrum™ floor lamp brings many of the benefits of natural daylight indoors for glare-free lighting that's perfect for a variety of indoor activities...now available for under $100!

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...for hobbies...

...at work...

...and when you need a source of natural light for close-up tasks.

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Its 27-watt compact bulb is the equivalent to a 150-watt ordinary light bulb. This makes it perfect for activities such as reading, writing, sewing, needlepoint, and especially for aging eyes.

You don't need the Sun to get many of the natural benefits of daylight

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- *See with clarity and enjoyment*
- *Creates natural, glare-free light*
- *Dual position switch for 27 and 18 watts of power is equivalent to 150 and 100-watt incandescent bulb*
- *Provides sharp visibility*
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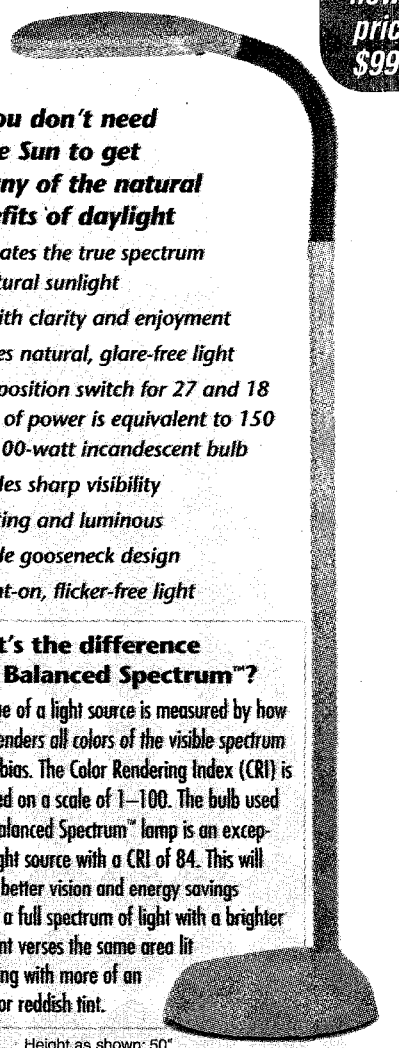
Height as shown: 50"

Bigger isn't always better. We've looked at lots of lights, but this one offered the benefit of dual light levels of 27 and 18 watts of power. There are bigger, higher wattage lights, but that doesn't make them perfect for reading or close work. This lamp has a flexible gooseneck design for maximum efficiency, with an "Instant On" switch that is flicker-free. The high-tech electronics, user-friendly design, and bulb that lasts five times longer than an ordinary bulb make this product a must-have.

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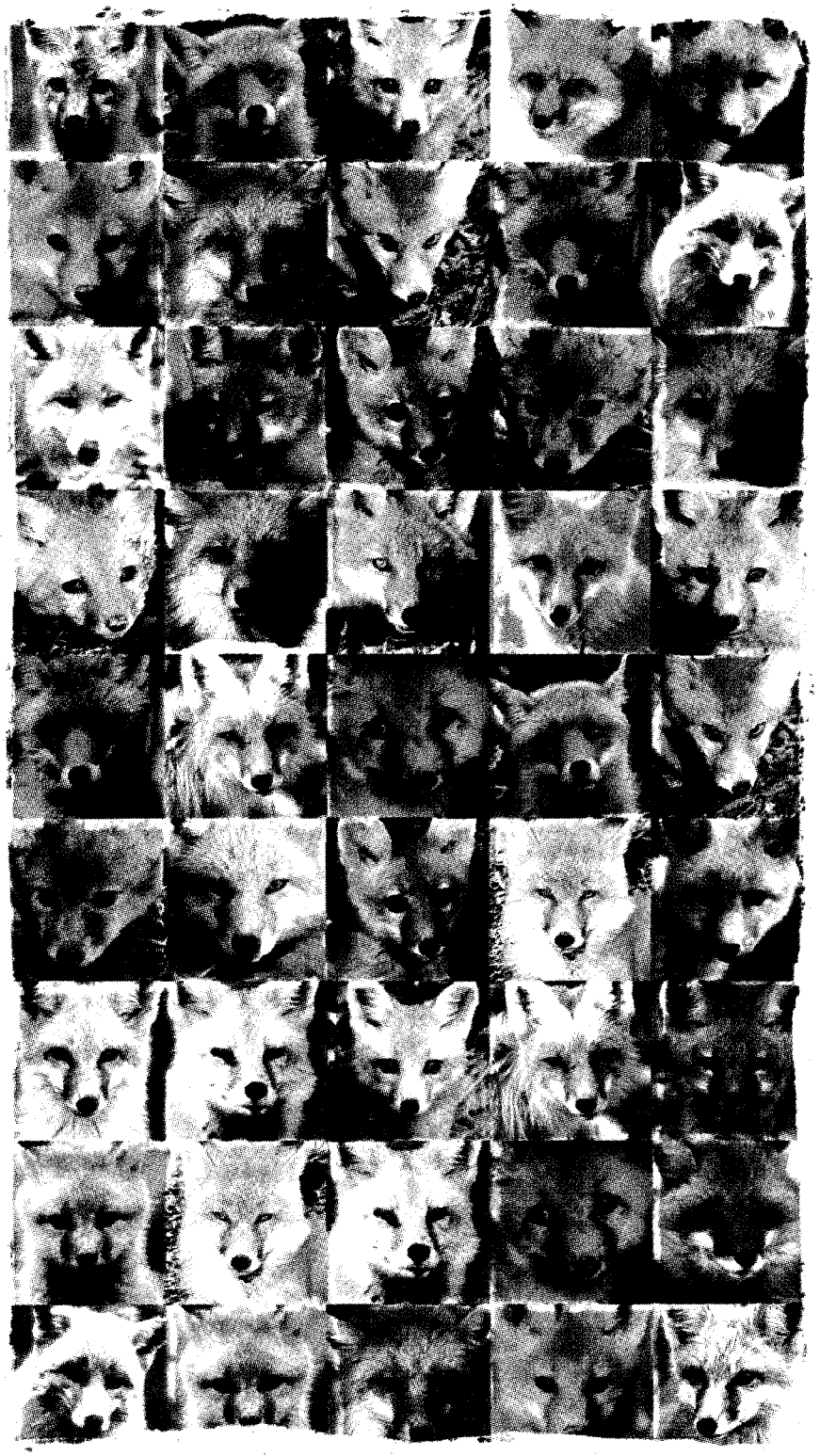

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